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ORIENTALISM AND THE KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY: KEMALIST WOMEN'S DISCOURSES ON KURDISH WOMEN IN THE 1990s

by
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ORIENTALISM AND THE KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY: KEMALIST WOMEN'S DISCOURSES ON KURDISH WOMEN IN THE 1990s

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ABSTRACT

ORIENTALISM AND THE KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY: KEMALIST WOMEN'S DISCOURSES ON KURDISH WOMEN IN THE 1990s

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In Turkish Studies, there has been a strong tendency to analyze the modern history of Turkey from the perspective of Westernization. Although this trend preserved its impact, the opportunities that arise from this perspective have not been utilized with regard to the Kurdish Question. In this thesis, first, I argue that the simultaneous projects of Westernization and modernization brought about a certain Orientalist attitude towards Turkey's eastern periphery. In a similar vein, I attempt to refine the social engineering theory with the inclusion of Orientalist and Occidentalist theories. I employ these theories because of the opportunities they provide to analyze Kemalist discourses with a particular emphasis on its developmentalist approach to the the eastern region as well as its ambivalent relationship with the West. In this study, I attempt to explore the outcomes of the Kemalist trajectory of modernization on the society in relation to the representation of Kurds and Kurdish women based on a CHP Pamphlet issued by the Women's Branch on the living conditions of southeastern women in the 1990s.

ÖZET

ŞARKİYATÇILIK VE TÜRKİYE'DE KÜRT MESELESİ:1990'LARDA KÜRT KADINLAR HAKKINDA KEMALİST KADINLARIN SÖYLEMLERİ

GÖKÇE GÜNDOĞDU

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Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ateş Altınordu

Anahtar kelimeler: Kemalizm, Şarkiyatçılık, 1990'larda Türkiye, Kürt Kadınlar, Kürt Meselesi

Türkiye Çalışmalarında Türkiye'nin modern tarihini Batılılaşma bakış açısı ile incelemeye dair güçlü bir eğilim vardır. Bu eğilimin etkisi devam etmiştir, fakat bu bakış açısının getirdiği fırsatlar Kürt Meselesi konusunda kullanılmamıştır. Bu tezde öncelikle şunu savunacağım: Eş zamanlı Batılılaştırma ve modernleştirme projeleri Türkiye'nin doğusundaki kırsal bölgelere Şarkiyatçı bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşılmasına sebep olmuştur. Benzer şekilde, sosyal mühendislik teorisini Şarkiyatçılık ve Garbiyatçılık teorilerini dahil ederek geliştirmeye çalışacağım; çünkü Kemalist söylemin doğu konusundaki kalkınmacı yaklaşımını ve Batı ile kurduğu çelişkili ilişkiyi incelerken bu teorileri kullanmak faydalı olacaktır. Bu çalışmada Kemalist modernleştirme yönteminin toplum üzerindeki sonuçlarını Kürtlerin ve Kürt kadınların temsil ediliş biçimlerini, 1998 yılında CHP Kadın Kolları tarafından hazırlanan güneydoğulu kadınların yaşam koşullarına ilişkin kitapçık temelinde inceleyeceğim.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. General Introduction

The Kurdish Question has been a controversial topic in Turkish politics since the late nineteenth century, and preserves its central place to date. In fact, in light of the recent political negotiations starting in 2009 with the Kurdish initiative, the Kurdish question has proven to be as persistent and central as ever. However, although the Kurdish question is widely debated in politics and studied in academia, its discussion has been restricted to the role of the rise of the Kurdish nationalist movement and Turkey's social engineering that had been adopted in the formative years of the republican period. While these discussions have been successful in situating the question within its larger political background, the Kurdish Question's repercussions at a societal and cultural level have not been studied exhaustively.

Following the academic strand that traces the roots of the challenges posed by the Kurdish Question back to Kemalist nationalist discourse, this thesis will first describe the Kemalist approach to nationalism, secularism, and modernism together

with its tense relationship to Islam as the basic tiers of the newly founded republic. I conceptualize these tiers as intertwined elements that are the foundations of modern Turkey and the modern Turkish identity. This formulation will provide the background out of which the Kurdish Question emerged, because Kurds have a unique place among other minorities of the country, first because they are not acknowledged as a separate ethnic and linguistic minority group but rather, borrowing Mesut Yeğen's term, as "Prospective Turks," and secondly, because they are Muslims, and finally, because of the geography they inhabit.

The eastern and southeastern regions of the country, in which the Kurds constitute the vast majority, are discursively defined as territories that require to be reformed with state action. This discourse is best exemplified in various *Doğu Raporları* (Eastern Reports) submitted to the CHP[1] (Republican People's Party) as well as to the state in different periods of time. While these reports were aimed at Turkifying the people of the region, the methods through which this goal was going to be achieved were almost always defined as "reforming" the region to the end that it reaches the same development level with the rest of the country. Similarly, certain stereotypical images of the people from the east emerged in cultural contexts. To give a few examples as to what kind of stereotypical images I am referring to, I can quote the findings of a research on the status of eastern women by a professor of sociology, Sevil Öner. The research states that "The oriental/eastern woman is neither as free as the Western woman, nor ambitious and successful as much as women from Çukurova, nor as productive as the Black Sea woman."[2] Another example can be given from a language perspective. In Turkish, the word "kıro" refers to "coarseness and being unmannerly" with connotations of being non-urban, although it has not found its way to the TDK (Turkish Language Association)'s dictionary. The word originally comes from Kurdish and means 'son,' similar to the word "angut," which refers to a kind of bird, yet is used in Turkish to call someone 'idiot.' Although it is not clear how these words came to be used in modern slang Turkish, it is important to explore the way words loaned from Kurdish have pejorative connotation. There can be found several examples of that on

[1] The founding political party and the carrier of the Kemalist ideology.
[2] Quoted from Milliyet's article published on April 10, 2000.

the cultural arena. My scope in this study, however, is not to trace these expressions with negative connotations, but rather to understand the mechanisms that made them possible.

I will argue that the emergence of these stereotypical images about Kurds can be better understood when it is put in the context of the Turkish identity quest under the modernization process, without suggesting that the Kurdish question can be reduced to that. I rather claim that the image of Kurds as "backward" rendered them as the Other of the Turkish identity that was a combination of different elements. Kemalist ideology will constitute the focus of my study, because it is the defining ideology of the Turkish identity. While Turkish identity, especially vis-à-vis its Western Other, was not clearly defined, the constructed image of Kurds helped to its definition. Through this summation, while Turks gained a better-defined Self, Kurds emerged as their Other. The construction of images of Kurds, imbued with negative connotations, I argue, paved the way for the construction of a new Turkish identity by demarcating Turkish people from Kurds. Secondly, these images justified and consolidated the hierarchical power relations that had an Orientalist character.

Concomitantly, I will argue that the creation of a Turkish identity was very much impacted by Turkey's modernization process on the model of the West. The relationship between the Turkish identity and the West has been ambivalent, because it both carries an admiration and inferiority vis-a-vis the West starting with the last periods of the Ottoman Empire. The circles of betrayal by the West had a significant bearing on the development of the nationalist psyche of the Turkish modernizers, which I will situate within the framework of Occidentalism. The Kurdish question and its relation to Turkey's accession to the European Union will be analyzed as instances where Occidentalism is at play.

Finally, against this historical and social background, I will explore the positions of Kurdish women assuming that they must be doubly affected by the question at stake, both because of the denial of Kurdish identity in general and the disadvantages of not being able to benefit from Turkish modernization reforms addressing women in particular. CHP will be the focus of my analysis because of two reasons. First, it is the

founding political party of the republic which stayed in power until 1950. It is the political party which gave Turkey its ideological contours. Second, it is a political party that defines itself as the safeguard of Turkey's development and modernization.[3] Third, CHP has always approached the Kurdish question from the perspective of economic and social underdevelopment (Uysal 2013: 28). Considering women's symbolic role in the dissemination of Kemalist ideology as well, I will embark on a discourse analysis of a CHP pamphlet on the circumstances of women in the eastern parts of Turkey, published in the 1990s. My decision to focus on the 1990s arises mainly from the increasing challenge the Kurdish question posed to the state during this time. In the analysis of the CHP pamphlet, I seek to avoid approaching Kurdish women's experiences and the stance of CHP women as monoliths.

1.1.1. Aim and Methodology

The primary inspiration for this study on Orientalism in the Kurdish question in Turkey stems from the work of historian Ussama Makdisi. Makdisi argues in his 2002 article "Ottoman Orientalism was a complex of Ottoman attitudes produced in the nineteenth-century during Ottoman reforms that implicitly or explicitly acknowledged the West to be the home of progress and the East, writ large, to be a present theater of backwardness" (Makdisi 2002: 769). His argument that the modernization period in the nineteenth century brought about a new kind of difference between the rulers and their subjects, especially in the Arabic lands, guided me in considering the Kurdish question from that perspective. According to Makdisi, while in the classical age the *difference* in the society was marked by a difference in religion and ethnicity, with the rise of the nineteenth century, difference within the empire began to be measured by *geographical* and *temporal* difference, marked primarily by the underdevelopment of the Arabic lands, which was endowed vis-à-vis this image with an unbridgeable nature (Ibid: 773). This analysis triggered my interest in the existence of a similar geographical and temporal difference between the western and eastern parts of Turkey in the state's

[3] http://dijitalmecmua.chp.org.tr/PageMecmua.aspx?Mecmua=5#p=37

discourse as well as in Kemalist ideology. As Makdisi further argues that the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, especially Mount Lebanon, inhabited by Arabs served as "proving grounds" for Ottoman modernism. Drawing on Makdisi's argument, I developed an interest in exploring if we can observe a similar Orientalist tendency in the handling of the Kurdish question in modern day Turkey. Inspired by above-mentioned theory of Ottoman Orientalism, this study aims to provide a complementary perspective on the Kurdish question in Turkey, as it is generally analyzed from the perspective of social engineering and nationalism in the literature without a consideration of geographical and temporal endowments stemming from the problematic modernist binaries of the West and the East.

This study is based on two primary sources. One is the memoir of Sıdıka Avar, which is gathered in a book entitled *Dağ Çiçeklerim* (2004). *Dağ Çiçeklerim* provides a good example of Kemalism's instrumentalization of women and education in implementing its Turkification policies on Kurds. Although the book exemplifies Kemalist Orientalism *par excellence*, the fact that it revolves around the *Dersim* question, which is distinguished from the rest of the territories populated by Kurds, renders it a work that has a special place in the general framework of the Kurdish question.[4] Still, I believe that it is an important source that demonstrates Orientalism at work in Turkey at its peak, especially considering the Turkish state's fierce way of "tackling the question."

The second and main primary source of this study is the CHP pamphlet issued in 1998 by the CHP Women's Branch. The pamphlet analyses living conditions of women in the southeastern regions. As a period when the Kurdish question gained a central place in the Turkish politics shaped by the tense clash between the Turkish state and Kurdish guerilla forces, the 1990s were the testimony to the inevitability of facing the

[4] An extensive analysis of *Dağ Çiçeklerim* that situates the book in its general historical background is Zeynep Türkyılmaz's Master's Thesis "Nationalizing Through Education: The Case of 'Mountain Flowers' in Elazığ Education Institute" (2001). To give one example specific to the Dersim case, in this research, Türkyılmaz quotes a speech by Atatürk in 1936 which reads: "Our most important interior problem is the Dersim problem. No matter at what cost, we have to remove this abscess at its roots" (Quoted in Türkyılmaz: 45). Five months after the delivery of this speech, the Turkish military operation in Dersim began, which results, according to the official records, in the removal of 7954 people from the region (dead or alive) and the relocation of 3500 people in different parts of Turkey (Türkyılmaz 2001: 45). Hence, the significance of *Dağ Çiçeklerim*, which narrates the memories of a Turkish teacher in the region for the daughters of the "revolted" Kurds.

Kurdish question for the Kemalists. Using this background as a foundation, a discourse analysis of the Kemalist women will be conducted in order to see to what extent the Orientalist discourses in the formative years of the republic are transformed, and to what extent they continue to define the relationship between Kemalist and Kurdish women. While the pamphlet is the primary document used in this analysis, research on the CHP Women's Branch—the first women's organization with the affiliation of a political party—has also proven to be a dearth of secondary literature.[5] Hence, I made use of a CHP report entitled "Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia's problems," published in 1989, when Deniz Baykal was the general secretary of the SHP. This report was originally entitled "Social Democratic Popular Party's Views on the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Problem and a Solution Proposal," and was originally penned for the Social Democratic Popular Party (SHP). When this report was issued, Deniz Baykal was the leader of the SHP. In 1992, however, following the lift of the law that prevented the reopening of closed political parties with the same name, the CHP was reopened and united with the SHP under the name CHP. Following this unification, CHP published the report's sections related to democratization. Considering that both the time frame and the focus of these reports correspond to one another, I compared and contrasted these two reports to illustrate to what extent they employ Orientalist methods.

Apart from the primary sources, I made use of secondary literature on Orientalism as well as Orientalism in the Ottoman and Turkish context. Edward Said's concept of Orientalism is the main theoretical source of this study. Historian Ussama Makdisi's argument argument that the modernization period in the nineteenth century brought about a new kind of difference between the rulers and their subjects, especially in the Arabic lands, has been one of the by main secondary sources to examine the Kurdish question from that perspective.

In the third chapter, I consulted the feminist literature on the Kemalist reforms targeting women, because feminist critics enable one to better understand the values with which Kemalism construed Kemalist women. As Kemalist women's discourses on

[5] The only secondary source I could reach was a study conducted by Mustafa Çadır (2011), "The Role of Political Parties' Women's Branches in Women's Participation in Politics," reached at http://kadininstatusu.aile.gov.tr/data/542a8e0b369dc31550b3ac30/mustafa_cadir_tez.pdf

Kurdish women is the focus of this study, the critiques on how Kemalist saw women and what kind of a relationship it formed with women will provide us with the necessary background of what created the women profile of Kemalism.

Inspired by above-mentioned theory of Ottoman Orientalism, this study aims at providing a new perspective to the Kurdish question in Turkey, which is generally analyzed from the perspective of social engineering and Turkish nationalism in the literature. By doing so, it hopes to complement the existing literature by emphasizing the role discourse of the leading parties, the state, and the mainstream media. For, these discourses help to justify the what social engineering and nationalism puts into practise and reproduces them.

1.1.2. Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 provides theoretical introduction to the eastern and southeastern regions in Turkey that are discursively defined as "underdeveloped" and "backward" territory. Having presented the basic discourses in regard to the eastern and southeastern regions, a brief outline of the key concepts in the Turkish modernization period is provided. Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical frameworks of Orientalism and Occidentalism as conceptual tools that can be productively used in understanding the background of the Kurdish question in Turkey. Chapter 3 questions Kemalists' definition of Kemalism as a "gender progressive" ideology, which paved the way for Kemalist women to define themselves as the symbol of the reforms and development. With the help of the discussions of how these reforms become a source of pride for Kemalist women, this chapter illustrates the complicity/manufactured consent of the Orientalist gaze towards the West by situating Kemalist women as a group who have internalized the role of civilizing the eastern regions. The memoirs of Sıdıka Avar, a teacher who worked for twenty years in towns where Kurds constitute the majority, are the embodiment of this civilizing mission "at its best." Chapter 4 builds upon this civilizing mission, which has strong Orientalist

tendencies, and explores to what extent Kemalist women's stance towards eastern women changed and to what extent it remained intact in the 1990s based on the discourse analysis of a CHP pamphlet issued by the women's branch on the conditions of southeastern women. The decision to focus on the 1990s is because this period witnessed substantial challenges to the state's basic tenets of unitary state and secularism. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the discussions in the previous chapters by situating the cultural dimension of the Kurdish question as one of the complexities that arise from 'Modernization' in a non-Western context.

1.2. Historical Background of Westernization in Turkey

In order to situate the Kurdish question in the Turkish modernization process, I will present a brief background of the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the modern Turkish republic. As the leaders of Turkish modernization, I will start with the Young Turks, who are considered to be the progenitors of the Kemalists. Similar to the Young Turks, Kemalists had been arbiters of the definition of what modernism is and how deeply it is rooted in the West. The central place of the image of the West in Kemalism leads this study to also consider the function of Orientalism and Occidentalism in the Kurdish question. Understanding the significance of Orientalism and Occidentalism in Turkey requires a reconstruction of Turkey's ambivalent relationship with the West starting from the last periods of the Ottoman Empire.

Under the influence of Kemalist doctrines, Turkey conceptualized a modernization on the model of the West so much so that modernization came to be equated with Westernization. Westernization has come to be considered as one of the most significant milestones in the study of Turkey's history. Before embarking on a detailed description of the role Westernization/Modernization played in the history of Turkey, I will try to set the ground for the way in which modernization slid into the subconscious of Turkishness and its subsequent relationship with Kemalists. Given that there is an inextricable relationship between Westernization and Islam in the Turkish

context, my preliminary framework will try to explore the ties between modernism, nationalism, and religion.

1.2.1. Islam

Explaining the Ottoman modernization process is definitely not an easy task, because it was a combination of many forces that interacted with each other and involved certain reform measures (Kamali 2006: 81). Since a more extensive modernization process started during the "Young Ottoman" movement, I will start by drawing a brief outline of that movement's relationship with Islam. The Young Ottoman movement was originally created by young and middle-ranking Ottoman bureaucrats who had a 'common knowledge of European civilization' in 1865 (Mardin 1962). Ironically enough, they gathered around an urge to react to the loss of power vis-à-vis the West. Originally, the central idea of the Young Ottomans was that reforms should not be based on an imitation of the West, but on a true and modern understanding of Islam. This idea was based on the premise that Islam was a rational religion and it would welcome scientific innovation. Moreover, it suggested that in its original form the Islamic community had been an "embryonic democracy" (Mardin 1961). However, by 1908, the Young Turks, who were the progenitors of Kemalism (Ahmad 1993; Mardin 2006; Zürcher 2004), came to have an opposite opinion of Islam. The Young Turks, in general terms, let alone seeing Islam as a modern and rational religion like the *Ulema*, interpreted it as a source of backwardness. That is, from a Eurocentric point of view, the Islamic tradition started to be seen as the cause of the country's poverty and slow growth.

However, the political circumstances came to force the Young Turks to acknowledge other things: The experiences in the Balkan Wars and the fact that virtually the entire European portion of the Empire was lost signaled to the Turkish nationalists that they would not be able to forge a nationalist spirit without reference to religion. Just restoring the loyalty to the ideals of the 1908 revolution was insufficient. With this realization, the Young Turks started to look for an instrumental Islam that

could be kept under the control of the state, being used in its service. Religion was instrumentalized for the sake of nationalism. This new understanding of Islam was to be subservient to the overall ideals of Turkish nationalism and the foremost expectation from Islam was to fulfill the unifying role that was assigned to it. This kind of an instrumental approach to religion was going to be increasingly utilized during the national struggle, as the lack of a nationalist ideal that could create "cohesion" among the community could not be overcome until the proclamation of the republic (Tunçay 2001). After the national struggle, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk started to declare his opinion about Islam, emphasizing that he was not against Islam, arguing that Islam was "the most rational and natural among religions" (Zürcher 2001: 46). He rather tried to abolish the intermediaries between believers and Islam. In his speeches where he uttered his stance against the *Ulema*, he also expressed his concern about *irtica*. This concept referred to a radical religious reactionism against the dissemination of Western values.

The pertinence of this unclear and ambivalent (Çelik 2001: 87) relationship between Islam and Westernization will be studied here at two levels. The first is that Islam was a defining element of both Ottoman and Turkish identity until the construction of the instrumental relationship with Islam. This new and ambivalent relationship created a certain loss/gap in the social identity. Borrowing historian and political scientist Benedict Anderson's (1983) insightful term, Islam was no longer a constant of the new "imagined community," although this was not pronounced openly by the Kemalist founders of country. This is doubly important, because the new milestone of the national identity of the imagined community was envisioned to be Western values. In that sense, the way Westernization and Islamic identity were conceptualized as being in binary opposition was setting the stage for the search of a new identity by the founders of Kemalist ideology and their paradoxical relationship with the West.

1.2.2. Ottoman and Turkish Elites

After the foundation of the Turkish republic, the Kemalists rose to power and took over the project of modernization they inherited mostly from the Young Turks. As Frey pointed "the Kemalist revolution was both the continuation and culmination of Turkey's historic struggle over modernization. It resulted in the victory of the modernizers and effective general modernization of the national elite" (Frey 1975: 59). They were the winners and their vigorous attempts at modernization and Westernization carried a Jacobin character, which did not leave sufficient room for opposing ideas (Tunçay 2001). In the case of Turkish politics, these opposing ideas would come from the traditional and religious base of the society.

The Kemalist elite's method was, more often than not, to see this societal base as a nebulous mass that should be shaped by the Kemalist elites. Frey conceptualizes this method as a "tendency of a small privileged sector to dominate society and, consciously or unconsciously, to regard its domination as legitimate and desirable because of the cultural or intellectual inadequacy it attributed to non-elite elements." (Frey 1975: 43). The reform measurements had to be carried out even when they contradicted the people's will (Çelik 2001: 77). The divide between the elite and non-elite, inevitably, created a fragmentation in the structure of society. That fragmentation found its best expression in Mardin's center and periphery cleavage. The elite in question in the early periods of the republic was one that had its roots in Ottoman society, which falls into the "center" in Şerif Mardin's key theory of center and periphery when explaining the social structure of the Ottoman Empire. The elite in Turkey carry many similar traits with the influential intelligentsia that emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth century, assuming a characteristic of modernization throughout the republican era (Frey 1975: 44).

Finally, Kemalists envisioned a modernization pattern through Westernization, which can be described as the "core" of that ideology (Çelik 2001: 75). However, Kemalists' relation with the West was far from being seamless. It expressed itself both in the form of an "object of desire" and "a source of frustration" (Ahıska 2003). When the pendulum hit the "object of desire," the West emerged in the Kemalist

consciousness almost always as a 'train' to be caught (Ahıska 2003). A sociologist who studied Occidentalism in Turkey at length, Meltem Ahıska contends that the metaphor of "catching the train of modern civilization" is striking because it created a persistent anxiety that had been haunting the society since the eighteenth century (2003), which will be the base of the discussion of Occidentalism in the second chapter.

1.2.3. Turkification

Both the internal and external policies of the last period of the Ottoman Empire and the early period of the Turkish Republic are marked by the rising nationalist movements and reflexes developed against them. The first reflex the empire developed *vis-à-vis* the rising nationalist movements was to pursue a strategic policy around the idea of embracing all the *millet*s[6] living in the empire by giving them gradually increasing prerogatives beginning with the declaration of Tanzimat regulations in 1839. This attempt to embrace plurality in the empire in a more satisfying and modern sense was mostly a necessity of the situation considering the escalating discontent among the millets across the lands of the empire. The solution imperial politics brought to these undesirable developments was the introduction of the ideology of *Ottomanism*. After the Balkan Wars, however, Ottomanism had already proven futile in keeping the nations together and was replaced by the ideology of Turkification (Somel 200: 112).

The penetration of nationalist ideologies into ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century was doubly important for the empire, because the great powers assumed the position of warrantor of minority rights in the empire. Although the Ottoman Empire considered the constitution as an ultimate end of discussions of reform in the Christian areas of the empire (Zürcher 2004, 74), the defeat in the Balkan Wars and the years of the War of Independence marked and disclosed the cleavages between the non-Muslim minorities and the Muslim majority, as a result of which ferocious Turkification projects began to be implemented. The years of WWI "gave the

[6] Here I refer to the *millet* system, by which I mean the minority groups living under their own religious authority in the era of the Ottoman Empire. For a detailed discussion of the *millet* system, see Braude, Benjamin and Lewis, Bernard, "Foundation Myths of the *Millet* System" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (1982).

Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) the opportunity to obtain dictatorial powers and carry through and expand their schemes of social engineering" (Üngör 2008: 24). Turks in power had started to pursue "ethnic majoritarian population politics" and thus breached with the Ottoman imperial statecraft. The idea behind the project was basically increasing the population of the majority at the expense of the minority in different ways including cultural assimilation, linguistic and economic nationalism etc. (Üngör 1998: 24), thereby creating a more homogenous population and a stronger state.

In that social engineering project, the Ottoman Empire's eastern provinces held a special place, because they were already "a contested territory under the forces of both imperial competitions and various nationalisms." Hence, it had to be "re-won" through coercive CUP projects (Üngör 1998: 20). A very important example of this is the forced deportations of the Armenians and Kurds in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. Regarding this social engineering project, Kieser argued that "in the Young Turk era the notion of "modernity" became a discourse legitimizing the use of state violence" (quoted in Üngör 1998: 19). Last but not least, while in the CUP period the victims of state violence included many ethnic groups including Armenians, Syriacs and European Muslims (Üngör 1998, 17), in the Turkish Republic era, only the Muslim 'minority' of the population in eastern Turkey had remained as a result of the violent state policies during the CUP period.

It is in this context that Kurds came to constitute the major Muslim "minority" ethnic group in the eastern regions of Turkey. They were not given a minority status, because according to the Lausanne Treaty (1923), a minority status was only relegated to the non-Muslim community (Karimova and Deverell 2001). Although the term "minority" is a relative one, following Kirişçi and Winrow, in this study, on a theoretical level, I will use the term minority to refer to a group "that strives to continue its existence and identity with self-consciousness" and "self-determination" (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 35). On a practical level, countries might be willing to acknowledge the existence of religious minorities within their own territories, but the same willingness might not apply to the case of an ethnic group that shares the same religion with the sovereign ethnic group (36). The case of Kurds falls into this category.

More importantly, mainly due to the fact that Kurds are a Muslim group, they were keenly considered to be "prospective Turks" (Yeğen 2009),[7] which can be argued to be a continuation of the *millet* system mentality. According to the 1924 constitution, in the first years of the republic, all inhabitants of Turkey were Turks. However, a remnant of the *millet* system, there was also a second, less inclusive definition of what a Turk was. This new definition was best articulated in highbrow works, textbooks, and CHP documents of the 1930s (Çağaptay 2006: 159). In this framework, "Islam was an avenue toward Turkishness" (159). The final and least inclusive definition of Turkification under High Kemalism was "ethno-religious" and, according to Çağaptay, was best observed in the day-to-day acts of the state (159). What differentiates Kurds from the rest of the Muslim population in Turkey is attributed to three major factors suggested by political scientist Soner Çağaptay, who wrote extensively on Kurds in Turkey. According to him, first, in the first years of the republican period, the eastern and southeastern regions are characterized by being a large, contiguous territory where Kurds constitute an overwhelming majority (Çağaptay 2006: 19). Second, compared to Kurds, the rest of Muslims were demographically insignificant according to the 1927 census (19). The next largest groups in these regions were Arabs and Circassians. However, their population amounted to less than one percent of the population in each of these regions. Thirdly, Kurds diverged from the rest of Muslims because they did not identify "so strongly with the Turkish-Muslim *ethnie* of the Ottoman Empire" (19). Çağaptay defines their status in the Ottoman era as follows: "Throughout the Ottoman era, the Kurds had lived in Kurdistan, a *rugged, autonomous* area, which had been considered part of the Ottoman fringe. They had not generally associated with the Ottoman state or Turkish-Muslim *ethnie*. Traditionally, the Kurds had been subsidiary to this community"[8] (19). The rugged and autonomous area Çağaptay refers to will constitute one of the basis of the theory of Orientalism in the Kurdish question discussed in Chapter 2. Çağaptay further argues that although Kurds started to ally with the Turkish-Muslim *ethnie* of the empire in tandem with rise of Armenian nationalism, they remained in the peripheries (19).

[7] In the same article, Mesut Yeğen argues that in the 2000s, because of the remarkable developments in Turkish politics, the Turkish state's approach changed from approaching Kurds as "prospective Turks" to "pseudo-citizens."
[8] Emphasis mine.

Also with the help of the political conjuncture that necessitated the rise of nationalist ideologies, Kurds have been subject to assimilationist practices of citizenship. While in theory they have been treated as proper members of the Turkish nation in terms of citizenship, in practice, the definition of Turkish citizenship has oscillated between the domination of ethnic and political perspectives (Yeğen 2009). As a result, formal status did not truly reflect the ambiguous perception of Kurds by the Turkish state. This discourse rather attempted to obscure the tension between Turkish and Kurdish nationalism and served to justify the assimilationist and developmentalist approaches of the Turkish state towards the Kurds. Therefore, it appears quite possible to argue that Kurds are treated as an informal minority group whose linguistic minority status is not legally acknowledged. Especially the fact that they constitute the majority of the population in the eastern and southeastern regions has thus made me treat Kurds as a "majority" minority within the framework of this study.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPASSE OF ORIENTALISM AND OCCIDENTALISM

"[In Turkey] for now, we have two classes: the Western class and the Eastern class. We want all the classes to become Western. However, we do not want them to be contaminated by the diseases of the countries in the West."[9]

Falih Rıfkı Atay

2.1. Introduction

Having provided a brief introduction to the key concepts of Turkish modernization period, which, by and large, was built upon a Western model, I would like to turn to the Kurdish population in Turkey and situate them within the theoretical framework of Orientalism and Occidentalism, which can be productively used to understand the complexities arising from the problematic implementation of the Turkish

[9] Quoted from Hande Özkan in *Kemalizm* (2001), İletişim Yayınları. p. 69. Translation mine.

modernization project. Şerif Mardin's (2006), Ussama Makdisi's (2002), Fatma Müge Göçek's (2013), and Selim Deringil's (2003) evaluations on Orientalism and Occidentalism will serve as the theoretical framework for this section. I will attempt to discuss which of these frameworks are the strongest in explaining social and cultural fragmentations, and in which contexts. Based on the background that these theoretical frameworks provide, this chapter will attempt to explore the opportunities that post-colonialism provides in understanding the specificities of Turkey's experience with modernity in a non-Western context. Finally, I will give a brief discussion of how the Kurdish Question fits into that picture. I will argue that Şerif Mardin's center-periphery cleavage still serves as a useful concept in understanding current Turkish society.

On the other hand, I will claim that his observations are true, but too general to explain the Kurdish Question. Although Mardin has no claim of exploring the Kurdish Question, one can draw on his theories and can come to terms with the reception of the Kurdish Question. Mardin's center-periphery cleavage is an insightful exploration of the roots of the social and cultural segmentation, and the Kurdish Question is a small but very central case, which very well exemplifies this cleavage. I argue that Mardin was right in his discovery of the center-periphery cleavage. However, in the case of the Turkish Republic, this theory can be refined with the inclusion of the concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism. These frameworks are more promising in exploring the complexities that arose during the transformation of Ottoman civilization into a modern civilization, with all its ambivalences and paradoxes. Hence, I will adopt a mixture of these two theoretical frameworks.

Within this framework, I will approach the Kurdish Question not solely as a Kurdish nationalist movement, but also as a cultural reaction to the center-periphery cleavage, as it is the case in many nationalist movements. My starting point will be the fact that the Kurdish Question is a subdivision of what Mardin defines as the "periphery." In the 1980s, alongside the major post-coup developments in the politics including the rise of Islamic movement, Kurdish Question as a movement from the periphery posed a significant challenge to the Turkish state politics, increasing its impacts on the unfolding new social positionings. It can even be said that the Kurdish Question is only a single facet of the "periphery." The Kurdish armed struggle erupted

out of this accumulated cleavage in the 1980s. However, this eruption tended to be considered as merely a national identity struggle in academia, if not as "separatism", and as "terror" in mainstream media and political discourse. Strength of what these expressions obscured one more time the historicity of the cultural and social tension that has been accumulating between Kurdish and Turkish nationalisms, which is almost always the case when nationalism is in question. My contribution to the literature will be to provide more examples for the theory about the dissolution of the center-periphery cleavage from the Kurdish Question that began to be in effect in the post-1980 period. Bringing the center and periphery cleavage together with the atmosphere of the 1990s will provide me with the opportunity to complement the existing literature with the inclusion of the interaction between discourse and culture. The problems in these approaches to the Kurdish Question resulted in missing out on the possibility of reconciliation.

2.2. Orientalism

A very contested term, Orientalism can be defined as a certain type of discourse that draws borders between East and West. Although Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978) popularized the term, it was in currency before Said's book appeared, with Anuoar Abdel-Malek's (1963) work, "Orientalism in Crisis." However, the term was introduced to academia through Said's seminal book. Its reception was far from being unified, creating many schisms about its interpretation. A very important example is the public debate between Said and Bernard Lewis.[10] Although many scholars illustrated some weaknesses of Said's argument, in this chapter I will employ the term as Said himself defined, considering the contentious ground of the terms as a testimony to its power.

[10] https://www.jstor.org/stable/2537089?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

2.2.1. The Theoretical Framework of Orientalism According to Edward Said

Said draws his general framework a catalogue of discourse analysis of many Orientalists from various genres ranging from Hugo and Nerval to Dante and Kipling.[11] He defines the scope of Orientalism as "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in the European and Western experience (Said 1978: 1). In this system, Orientalism functions through three interdependent channels: first, through academic institutions; second, through the ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and Occident; and third, the relation between Europe and the Orient is defined in geographical, historical, and linguistic terms as follows: "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of the most recurring images of the Other" (Said 1978: 1). He argues that with the introduction of colonization, these various relations accumulated to create "[...] a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident.'" This distinction turned into a tool that helped "to define Europe" (Said 1978: 1) and a means for dominating and reconstructing and having authority over the Orient (Said 1978: 3).

While Said is looking at the Orientalists, he notices the ambitious production of knowledge about the Orient, especially in the nineteenth century. The problematic approach to the Orient lies in the fact that "[...] a large mass of writers [...] have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind', 'destiny, and so on" (Said 1978: 2). According to him, the Orientalists adopted an essentialist approach to the Orient and presupposed that it was ontologically different from the Occident, which created the drive to produce knowledge of the Orient and disseminate it. Out of these descriptions, Europe emerged more as a sign of "power over the Orient than it is a veridic discourse about the Orient"

[11] Said's theory of Orientalism is criticized by many scholars on the grounds that it is based on a vast period of time encompassing the ancient and the middle ages. For an example, see Ernest Gellner (1993).

(Said 1978: 6). As a result, this power came to express itself as the authority to represent the Orient. Historian A. L. Macfie recounts as follows:

> The Orientalist, through his writing, 'creates' the Orient. In this process, he assists in the creation of a series of stereotypical images, according to which Europe (the West, the 'self') is seen as essentially rational, developed, humane, superior, authentic, active, creative, and masculine while the Orient (the East, the 'Other')(a sort of surrogate, underground version of the West) is seen as being irrational, aberrant, backward, crude, despotic, inferior, inauthentic, passive, feminine, and sexually corrupt. Together, they contribute to the construction of a "saturating hegemonic system, designed consciously or unconsciously, to dominate, restructure and have authority over the orient (Macfie 2000: 8).

Having drawn out Said's tenets of Orientalism, I would now like to point out some instances that pertain particularly to the case of the Kurdish question in Turkey. The first striking point is the way in which the Orientalists' imagination depicts the Orient as a "lamentably alien" entity. Including the other peoples considered as degenerate in the West as well, Said explains the way the Orientals are viewed by the Orientalists as an admonishment:

> Along with other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien (Said 1978: 207).

It is this quotation that designated Orientalism as not only a term that addresses Orientals but also other marginalized groups in society with the same demarcation and sharp diverseness in its discourse, in this case leading us to the Kurdish question in Turkey. As I will exemplify and support with the theoretical framework below, I argue that a similar approach of demarcation can be observed in the Turkish state's discourse regarding Kurds. As will be argued more substantially in the following pages, similar methods of "moral-political admonishment" towards Kurds, the discourse of their "lamentably alien" character, and finally an authoritative attitude against them were employed. I claim that this is a consequence of the "borrowed" character of modernity from the West.

As designated by Said, Orientalism almost always refers to a production of knowledge about its object. Regarding Kurds, Turkish state ideology employed this method of knowledge production through various reports on the eastern and southeastern regions. One of these reports is the report submitted by the chief civil inspector Hamdi Bey to the ministry of internal affairs in 1926. He states the danger he foresees in the Dersim region as follows: "According to the impressions my contacts in the region left on me, Dersim is getting increasingly Kurdified and the danger is growing day by day" (Mumcu 1993: 29). According to Hamdi Bey, the problem would be solved by opening schools, making roads, establishing factories with the ultimate goal of bringing civilization to the region. In his own words, the people of the region "are under the influence of ignorance, financial difficulties, internal and external deceptions, tendencies of Kurdishness, [...] and feelings of revenge." Hence, "they are putty in the hands of the sheikhs and aghas" (29). In the following years, after the suppression of the Dersim uprising, the regional governor of Diyarbakır reported the conditions of the region. In 1930, the public inspector İbrahim Tali Bey issued another report on the region, which suggests isolating Dersim from its surroundings in order to compel people to surrender due to starvation. The General of the army, Fevzi Çakmak, was pointing out the same "undeveloped" quality of the people of the region: they were ignorant. To resolve this, he proposed the same measures: construction of the roads, collection of the arms in the region, etc. (Mumcu 1993: 34). He concluded his report by urging the state to handle Dersim as a colony (35). Even though the state operation in Dersim was so harsh that it could be categorized literally as colonization based on the above-mentioned accounts, these reports of the region demonstrate, at least, the zeal and necessity of knowledge production in the region very well. They also reveal the way reports, which were imbued with the motivation of Turkification, consolidate the tendency to identify eastern and southeastern regions as places that require radical reforms. It is also important to note that these reports were neither restricted to Dersim nor to that period of time as will be explained in the fourth chapter.

Turkish state ideology's Orientalism can also be traced to the definition of Turkish nationalism that excludes other ethnic identities within the borders of Turkey and demands a denial of these excluded identities. Bound by this restriction of Turkish

nationalism, Turkish state ideology created the right setting for a discourse of the Kurds' "sensuality, tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness" (Said 1978: 205), as was referred by Çakmak's outright description of Kurds as "ignorant." This description accounts for the way the eastern regions of Turkey are essentially considered to be as the backwater of its dynamic and progressive western parts. Finally, I will argue that the Orientalising attitude becomes more meaningful when we take into account that Said amended his own theory of Orientalism by adding that Orientalism is reinforced when "the modern Orient, in short, participates in its own Orientalizing" by the attitudes and discourses of the intelligentsia of the Orient (Said 1978: 325).

2.3. Occidentalism

There seems to be much less consensus regarding Occidentalism's definition. Its most prevalent connotation is "anti-Westernism" (Ahıska 2008). The term's popularization is traced to Buruma and Mergalit's book *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (2004). For Buruma and Margalit, the term refers to "[T]he dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies [...]" (Buruma and Margalit 2004: 6). Hence, they embark on interrogating the clusters of prejudice against the West and tracing them to their historical roots. According to their treatment of the term, "Occidentalism, like capitalism, Marxism, and many other modern -isms, was born in Europe, before it was transferred to other parts of the world" (Buruma and Mergalit 2004). Although Buruma and Margalit acknowledge the significant impact Western modernity made on non-Western contexts such as Turkey, Japan, and Russia, they miss out on the opportunity to see what kinds of complexities and ambivalences this impact led to in their respective societies. Their treatment of Occidentalism is deficient in the sense of acknowledging the reciprocity at stake. Whilst Occidentalism referred to a kind of threat to the core values of modernity from its 'enemies' for Buruma and Margalit, some non-Westerners such as Egyptian philosopher Hassan Hanafi, made sense of it as a "response to the colonizing West" (Ahıska 2008). In Hanafi's conceptualization,

Occidentalism entails a reversal of roles: "The West becomes the Other, the Orient is restored to Self." In that sense, for the non-Westerners, Occidentalism emerged as a tool of reversing the hegemony of the West, yet by using the same tools used by Westerners.

2.3.1. Occidentalism: A Complex Concept of Modernity's Impasse

My contention is that Occidentalism neither corresponds to simply reversing Orientalism nor is it a blunt attack on Western values, at least not in the trajectory of Turkey's modernization process. The way I employ the term encompasses a complex and sometimes contradictory "love-hate" relationship with the West. As discussed in Chapter 1, Turkey's modernization process was heavily influenced by Western values, which created a visible admiration for the West on the part of Turkish elites. However, this admiration was not pure; rather, it was blended with a certain amount of inferiority vis-à-vis the West and its values. The feeling of inferiority, however, might have been sometimes reflected as fear or, when the concept of modernity was borrowed from the West, it carried some of the Orientalist discourses and methods the West assumed in the same baggage.[12]

The definition of the concept of Occidentalism as it is employed in this study is very much informed by Meltem Ahıska's approach to the term. In her extensive analysis of Occidentalism in Turkey in her book *Occidentalism in Turkey: Questions of Modernity and Turkish Identity in Turkish Radio Broadcasting* (2010), Ahıska explores how a historical overview of the development of Turkish radio broadcasting reveals the concomitant national culture construction. She finds that the discourse of the radio broadcasting tried to find a "pure national voice," (Ahıska 2010: 83) while also attempting to eliminate anything that had the connotation of the 'East,' as shown in the example of how *alla turca*[13] music was banned from the Turkish radio between 1934–1936, because the Turkish elite felt that alla turca music represented "bad taste,"

[12] The best example of that fear is embodied in what was coined as "Sévres Syndrome." For a detailed discussion of that syndrome, see Göçek, Fatma Müge (2011). *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era*. London: I.B.Tauris or Bülent Aras, *Sevres Syndrome*.

[13] From the Italian *alla turca* meaning 'Turkish style.'

"primitivity," and "being uncivilized."[14] More significantly, alla turca music was also associated with being eastern or Arab but certainly not Turkish, which not only helped construct a national identity but also demarcated itself from the so-called East (80). Ahıska illustrates that the motivation behind this approach was creating both a Western and a unique national style of broadcasting. In that sense, "the West is both within and without; it signifies the desire to be both same and different (27).

Ahıska (2010) also asserts that "Occidentalism is neither simply a desire to become Western nor a hostility against the West, but a much more complex *power discourse* and *fantasy*"[15] (307). It is important here to note the word "power discourse," because it underlines Occidentalism's hegemonic nature, just like Orientalism's. This power relation works on two layers. The first layer is the power relations with the West. In this formulation, Turkish elites do not simply mimic the West, but reconstruct its values in the process of its borrowing. The utilization of a power discourse consolidates the hegemony of the nation builders. The subject (the Self) and object (the Other) of that power discourse have played against each other in very different social and political instances in Turkish history. "Different people and segments of the society are categorized either as 'national but not modern,' or 'modern but not national' and cast as Others" (Ahıska 2010: 28). Meltem Ahıska further points out the consequences of Occidentalism within the society as follows: "The re-codification and operationalization of a notion of the West is also mobilized within power relations to demarcate, define, and control others within the society" (Ahıska 2010: 41).

It is through this framework of "demarcation and defining the Self and controlling others within the society" that I would like to discuss the cultural consequences of the Kurdish Question. As Ahıska herself also notes, I argue that the most subtle example of this power relation is the way in which the Kurdish Question is handled on the cultural level. As Ahıska also points out, the eastern regions where the Kurds predominantly live are translated into "an inner border that symbolically

[14] The best example of that fear is embodied in what was coined as "Sévres Syndrome." For a detailed discussion of that syndrome, see Göçek, Fatma Müge (2011). *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era*. London: I.B.Tauris or Bülent Aras, *Sevres Syndrome*.

[15] Emphasis mine.

separates the West of Turkey from the 'backward' East, contaminated by Arabic, Kurdish and other cultures" (Ahıska 2010: 15). In my estimation, while the Hamidiye troops, forced disappearances, and military interventions in the region constitute the political and military layers of this question, the discourses that the state developed and their reflections in the mainstream media, the cartoons or the daily talk about the Kurds constitute the cultural level. In this formulation, these two levels play a complementary role.

2.4. The Kurds' Place in Society: From the Ottoman Legacy to the Republic

A glance into Turkish history could easily reveal the perennial Kurdish question, which carries its importance and its relics to date. The history of the Kurds in Turkey can be identified to be a 'minority history' in the same sense as historian known for his contributions to postcolonial theory and subaltern studies Dipesh Chakrabarty uses it. Chakrabarty problematizes 'minority histories' by stating that minority and majority histories are not natural entities, but constructs based on statistics. Interestingly enough, sometimes an ethnic group which actually constitutes the majority may be considered the minority (Chakrabarty 2000: 100). Given Chakrabarty's insightful observation, Kurds in Turkey, and in other countries where they live, have a minority history, and yet in some parts they actually constitute the majority—especially in the regions people tend to call the 'Eastern' parts of Turkey.

In this section, I will further analyze the way in which the provinces where Kurds constitute a vast majority have become the locus of "backwater" discourse. The concept of underdevelopment as a fact is one critical viewpoint, and its reflections on the cultural arena is another. Hence, the political background of the Kurdish Question will not be exhaustively delineated as it is beyond the confines of this study. Still, since it is essential to provide a framework of the politics in order to be able to base a discourse analysis upon it, I will present a brief history of the Kurds in Turkey.

The Kurdish community living in Turkey comprises around 13 million people according to a 2001 statistic (Karimova and Deverell 2001), which corresponds to over 20 percent of Turkey's population. The Kurdish population is concentrated in 11 provinces of the southeast (Karimova and Deverell 2001). According to Mutlu (1996), Kurds constitute 70 percent of the population in the eastern and southeastern regions. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923, relegated only the non-Muslim community to a "minority status" in Turkey, thus disqualifying any Muslim ethnic minorities (Karimova and Deverell 2001). As a Muslim community, Kurds were not given an ethnic, linguistic, or national minority status. Usage of the Kurdish language is only allowed in non-political contexts[16] (UNHCR 1997) or in an educational setting (Karimova and Deverell 2001).

Thomas Eriksen (1993) classifies the Kurdish community as a proto-nation, which he defines as follows: "By definition, these groups have political leaders who claim they are entitled to their own nation-state and should not be ruled by others. As they don't have a nation state, they are more likely to have more characteristics in common with nations than with urban minorities or indigenous people" (Eriksen 1993: 19). He also adds that "[t]hey are always territorially based, they are differentiated according to class and educational achievement." As a proto-nation, in Eriksen's estimation, Kurds also claimed that they could be referred to as a "nation without nation-state" (Eriksen 1993: 19). Although there is no legal impediment in Kurds representing themselves in parliament, several attempts at representation by Kurds failed (Göle 2000), in a way, symbolically demonstrating the state's ambivalence to having Kurds in leadership or representational roles. In 1984, however, Kurdish nationalism had started to express itself violently through its guerilla wars against the state through the armed group, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). These conflicts had resulted in at least 30,000 casualties until the arrest of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan (Yüksel 2006: 780. Moreover, the relations between the state and the southeast were aggravated following the rising conflict with the PKK (Karimova and Deverell 2001; Sarıgil 2009).

[16] UNHCR Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers' (Geneva: UNHCR Centre for Documentation and Research, 1997)

In terms of integrating Kurds in society, the Turkish state was willing to accept them as citizens, yet on the condition that they acknowledge the Turkish identity and give up their Kurdish identity. Those who complied become successful actors in society, while those who resisted and retained their identities become marginalized (Göçek 2011: 153).

2.4.1. Historical Roots of "Borrowed Orientalism" in the Ottoman Empire

Post-colonialist scholars criticized some scholars studying the Third-World for just focusing on the colonizer and the colonized, leaving these two sides as binary opposites. They offer, instead, to expand the scope of Orientalism with the inclusion of such in-between places as the Ottoman Empire (Göçek 2013; Deringil 2003). Scholars like Ussama Makdisi, Selim Deringil, and Meltem Ahıska[17] have attended to this lacuna, focusing on the complexities that emerge when the role Orientalism played is studied in the context of the Ottoman Empire, discovering some peculiar characteristics. In this section, I will try to turn to scholars with a post-colonial studies background to point out the analytical suggestions post-colonial studies offer.

Fatma Müge Göçek argues that an analysis of Ottoman history, together with the histories of the Persian, Russian and Austria-Hungarian Empires, could productively inform traditional post-colonial theory because of its "negotiated modernity," which she defines as an intention of generating knowledge that is not influenced by Western knowledge (Göçek 2013). The Ottoman Empire offers particularly productive information because it was a political power both in pre-modern and modern times. Moreover, its geographic reach encompassed the Balkans, Anatolia, and the Middle East. Hence, the Ottoman Empire does not easily fit into the binary oppositions that scholars so far chose to examine. Thereby, she aims to disturb the neatly divided boundaries of the colonizer and the colonized (Göçek 2013).

[17] Here, I do not necessarily claim that these scholars have associated themselves with post-colonial theory, but the quality of their studies carry certain commonalities with other post-colonial theorists.

Examining the rising superiority of Europe vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire, Selim Deringil (2003) suggests an analysis of Ottoman modernization on the model of the West both from a reactionary perspective and from an internalization perspective on the part of the Ottoman Empire. He argues that Ottoman elites brought the concepts of modernity and colonialism together in their attempt to survive. Deringil calls this conflation "borrowed colonialism." According to Deringil's insightful argument, the Ottoman elite adopted a similar colonialist attitude towards its own peripheries in the nineteenth century and treated those provincial places as colonial settings (Deringil 2003).

On the other hand, Ussama Makdisi analyzes the relationship between Orientalism and the Ottoman Empire in dialogue with Deringil's concept of "Borrowed Colonialism." Having observed a similar complexity in Ottoman attitudes towards its own periphery, Makdisi contends that in the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire positioned the West as the locus of progress, and the East as that of backwardness. However, the scene was not as simple as that. The empire claimed agency and originality through Islamic practice. Together with that claim of agency, the empire also created a pre-modern within itself, from which it strived to distinguish itself as much as possible. To do so, the empire embarked on disciplinary and orientalizing attitudes towards its eastern peripheries that bore similar traits to that of the European powers. In this sense, Ottoman Orientalism was a "defining facet of Ottoman modernity" (Makdisi 2002: 769).

Deringil (2003) and Makdisi (2009) have argued that a paradigm shift occurred in the eighteenth century in the way Ottoman elites conceived its periphery. While the former calls it 'borrowed Orientalism' and the latter 'Ottoman Orientalism,' these scholars agree on the ideology's close interaction with rising European colonialism. Deringil (2003) also argues that the Ottomans' borrowed colonialism developed side-by-side with nationalism (314). As a result, it is evident that in Ottoman Orientalism the predominant figure was Europe—the locus of modernism and development. Bringing it together with Said's observation about the distinction between Orientalists' approach to their colonies and that of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman Empire's Orientalist tendencies gain more significance. Said puts this distinction as follows: "The point is

that the very designation of something as Oriental involved an already pronounced evaluative judgment, and in the case of the people's inhabiting the decayed Ottoman Empire, an implicit program of action" (Said 1978: 207).

2.4.2. Kurds in Contemporary Turkey

What does 'Eastern' denote within the borders of Turkey? Why are the eastern parts of the Black Sea region not considered to be 'Eastern,' but the parts populated mostly by Kurds are? Where is the 'East' in Turkey? The 'East' in question is as elusive as the term 'the Middle East' (Davison 1959-1960). When the Kurdish question is placed side-by-side with the popular nebulous conception of the 'Eastern' part of Turkey in comparison to the rest of Turkey—be it the *de jure* capital, Ankara, or the *de facto* capital Istanbul, or a provincial part of Turkey (as if it does not require a characterization other than being the most 'backward' part of the country)–it seems there are significant similarities between the way the Turkish state ideology approached the Kurds and how British colonialists in Egypt approached the native Egyptian population.

This question about what eastern denotes gains more importance when we connect it with Ahıska's assessment of Occidentalism as the way the West figures in the temporal/spatial imagining of modern Turkish national identity (Ahıska 2003: 354). Given Deringil and Makdisi's findings which demonstrate that the Ottomans' representation of their own periphery was informed by Western Orientalism and Western values, I argue that Orientalism and Occidentalism appeared as flip sides of the same coin. That is, the West was always figuring in the way the center was imagining its own periphery. Hence, the conflation of Occidentalism and Orientalism needs to take into account the specific complexities of Turkish Orientalist ideology in reference to its treatment of the Kurdish population.

Testifying to Deringil and Makdisi's arguments regarding the Ottoman Empire, one of the characteristics attributed to 'Eastern' Turkey is 'backwardness' in relation to contemporary Turkish society. On the cultural level, Turks who constitute the Other for

Westerners invented their own "barbarian" status, which shifted from being Muslim (according to the West), to being Kurdish (according to Turkish Orientalism). First as Muslim, then as Kurds. These two groups have been presented as impediments to Turkey's modernization. (Göle 2000: 66). Turkish Orientalism attributed the image of being a "barbarian", "vulgar"[18], and "backward" to its Kurdish population. During this process of invention, or "fantasy" in Ahıska's words, the eastern regions have emerged as the pseudonym and the locus of Kurdish backwardness. When explaining this, Timothy Mitchell's argument that modernity has always been associated with a certain place and time is useful. In many uses the modern is just a synonym for the West (Mitchell 2000). In such a conception, one part is always temporarily and spatially more advanced, leaving the other doomed to backwardness. Similarly, as Makdisi points out, in the perspective of Ottoman Orientalism, the people living in the peripheries such as Mount Lebanon were regarded as "backward" (Makdisi 2002: 770). Demonstrating a continuous pattern, the way the regions where the Kurds populate emerge in the popular imaginary is an equation with backwardness in contemporary Turkey that remained as a vestigate of the empire into the modern day construction of the Turkish republic.

The second characteristic of Ottoman Orientalism was to regard the populations in its periphery (periphery as referring to the eastern side in Makdisi's examination) as 'not-yet-Ottoman' (Makdisi 2002: 770). This observation becomes much more meaningful when it is brought together with Mesut Yeğen's argument about contemporary Turkey that Kurds have been regarded either as "Prospective-Turks'/'to-be-Turks" or "Pseudo- Citizens" (Yeğen 2009; Üngör 2008). Yeğen has argued that the prospective-Turk image became a 'meta-image' during the republican period, although it does not follow a stable route. Even though Yeğen's assessment does not go further and give a longer history of the Kurds under Ottoman rule, the observation that Kurds were considered to be 'to-be-Turks' overlaps with Makdisi's 'to-be-Ottomans' evaluation in a way that supports the persistence of an Orientalist discourse in the republican period too.

[18] "Kıro" in its original Turkish.

There are also other moments when 'eastern' Anatolia has been treated with an Orientalist ideology. Yeğen (2009), among others, argues that the Turkish state embarked on a comprehensive program of assimilation with the techniques of increasing state-sponsored education, improving transportation facilities, and conducting censuses (600). Those apparatuses are all techniques Mitchell also brings attention to in his book *Colonizing Egypt* (1988) in which he discusses the colonization of Egypt. It is worth noting that what those techniques imply is the backwardness and underdeveloped character of the region in question, which has legitimized reckless state interventions that do not take the unique regional dynamics into account.

There are also other techniques such as the compulsory resettlement of Kurds in the West and Turks in the East with the motive of creating more homogeneously Turkish/Turkified citizens (Yeğen 2009; Yükseker 2005). What an overall assessment of the aforementioned techniques implemented in the mission of Turkification imply is the nationalist motive embedded in the Turkish Orientalism.

2.5. Occidentalism: Europe Re-enters the Scene

Although a more contextualized discussion of the 1990s will be provided in the following chapter, I would like to exemplify the employment of Occidentalism in the 1990s with regard to the resettlements of Kurds. Towards the end of the 1990s, one date played a role as a catalyst with regard to the forced displacements and the social problems related to it. In 1999, Turkey was granted candidacy status for EU accession on the condition that Turkey meets the Copenhagen Criteria for the accession negotiations to begin. This date was a milestone in terms of the state discourse with regard to the forced displacements and to the Kurdish Question. Only after this date did the post-displacement problems begin to be considered a priority of foreign policy (Ayata and Yükseker 2005). The improvement in Turkey-European Union (EU) relations brought about an improvement in the non-Muslims' status (Çağaptay 2006: 163). Turkey's zeal of satisfying EU's accession rules resulted in a transformation of the state' position from complete denial to regulation in terms of the consequences of this

internal displacement, because now the displacements were under the watch of an international audience so much so that the internal displacement problem was going to be included in the European Commission's annual progress reports in 2002. However, the displacement problem was still being treated under the umbrella of regional development in the arena of internal politics.

What makes this development relevant to the discussions in this thesis is the fact that the entrance of the European "gaze" changed the way the Turkish state approaches its domestic situation. While the state's first reaction was to deny its responsibility for these displacements, in the cases that were taken to the European Court of Human Rights, Turkey was sentenced to pay compensation to the plaintiffs, beginning with cases dating back to 1996. Still, none of the governments accepted that the officials had complicity in the forced displacement (Ayata and Yükseker 2005: 17). Within this context, when there is an incentive presented by Europe, the locus of modernity, to become part of it, the ambivalent stance of the state tends to change its position towards the Kurdish Question. Only when EU membership becomes a foreign policy priority and a tenable objective the state agree to take steps towards tackling post-displacement problems (Ayata and Yükseker 2005: 32). Considering the discussion and analysis above, it is not hard to arrive at the opinion that the Kurdish Issue is addressed in a more proper way when it gains the potential of changing something for the western "gaze," exemplifying the role of Occidentalism. However, to what extent this willingness is genuine and would be put into practice, is still open for discussion.

2.6. The Center-Periphery Cleavage

In the prism of the above-mentioned descriptions, an important question arises: What makes the Kurdish case special in relation to other ethnic or religious groups, like the Alevis, Circassians or Armenians in the country with regard to Kemalist policies? At

first glance, it can well be argued that there are many groups that could not or did not want to come to terms with Kemalist ideology and its policies, considering its decreasing appeal for various groups starting from the 1950s. Were the Kurds the only group for whom Kemalism was not appealing, or who were affected by Kemalist policies? I believe that the answer to this question lies in the social composition of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. In order to answer that question, I would like to consult Şerif Mardin's seminal theory of "center and periphery," for a discussion of Orientalism in the context of Ottoman and Turkish politics is similar to that of the center-periphery paradigm in the sense that the center assumes a superiority vis-à-vis its periphery.

Mardin worked extensively on the trajectory of modernism in Turkey. He approached the Turkish concept of modernity as a transformation of Ottoman society to the Turkish republic and claimed that this transformation had substantial consequences for present-day Turkish society. In a similar vein, he observed a societal divide which dates back to Ottoman history and society: the "center-periphery" cleavage, which has been a seminal terminology in understanding current Turkish society because it has endured in the republican period, although it has not been preserved in its entirety. *Center*, in Mardin's own words, "stands for the core of legitimacy that enables the Ottoman state to function as well as for the central bureaucratic apparatus that kept the state functioning. *Periphery* refers to the residual social arena—the institutions and the geographical area that lived apart from the center and were only in loose integration with it" (Mardin 2006).

In his discussion of the historicity of the center and periphery cleavage in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, Mardin argues that while the integration or separation of the non-Muslim elements in the empire has been extensively addressed, the complications that emerged out of the integration of non-Muslim groups were undermined. However, the latter posed as many—if not more—challenges as the integration of non-Muslims within the nation-state (Mardin 2006). Although the Young Turks enforced unification in the regions where the cleavage was more visible through educational and cultural unification, their efforts proved to be inefficient to gather the support they expected.

Mardin states that there was a demarcation between officials and the masses in the Ottoman Empire, including the urban and rural masses simultaneously. This was highlighted in the bureaucratic core of the state. What he refers to by the "bureaucratic core of the society" is the control of the economy. A very symbolic example of this domination of the economy is the restrictions on property ownership, which assigns the Sultan as owner of the all the arable lands, and on sumptuary regulations. The state's claim to control society was symbolically conveyed by the "cultural preeminence" of the elites. Mardin holds that, as a result of this mechanism of cultural segmentation, "the periphery developed its own extremely varied counter-culture, but it was well aware of its secondary cultural status (2006). He also argues that the elites maintained their superior position with the help of certain "symbolic differences." Although the form or content of these symbolic differences is not relevant to the present discussion, the evaluation supports the discussions of Orientalism/Occidentalism (Mardin 1973: 171).

Mardin states that that these policies were adopted, by and large, by the Kemalists in the earliest stages of organizing the national independence movement, though Kemalists sought integration and homogenization in the society. Yet, because of the discrepancy between discourse and reality, the social structure was preserved to a great extent (Karaömerlioğlu 2006: 75), which created its own problems due to the ambivalent stance arising from it. Among the representational organizations of the independence movement is a party which represents the periphery. According to Mardin, "The symbolic expression of the Kemalists'" opposition to the Second Group and to provincials focused on religion" (Mardin 2006: 310). He also points out that when "this opposition party was formed whose activities almost coincided with a Kurdish revolt in 1925, a Law for the Maintenance of Order was passed, giving the government wide powers for two years" (Mardin 2006: 310). The quote, I believe, illustrates an instance when intolerance towards the periphery and Kurds come to the surface in a way that shows the relation between them.

Mardin further argues that the coup d'état, a revolution in Mardin's words, underlines the cleavage between the center, "now identified with the preservation of a static order, and the periphery, the real "party of movement" (Mardin 2006: 314). Mardin finally asserts that "two facets of the peripheral code seem to have emerged with

clearer outlines during modernization: the periphery as made up of primordial groups, and the periphery as the center of a counter-official culture. Both were Bêtes noires of the Young Turks and the Kemalists. But the policies of the modernizers, as along with fortuitous developments, worked to highlight the second facet of peripheral identity" (Mardin 2006: 315). I believe that in this quote, once again, Kurds are implied by "primordial groups." In that description, too, the official counter-culture is preferred over the primordial group and the former group is highlighted in a way that supports the above-mentioned negligence of the state elites regarding Kurds. Mardin concludes suggesting that "rumbling concerning Kurdish attempts at separate organization [has] been heard for some time. There is evidence both of new cleavages and of differentiation *within* periphery" (Mardin 2006: 315). In retrospect, I believe, a kind of resolution took place in terms of the composition of the cleavage in Turkey rather than differentiation within the periphery, considering the central role the Kurdish Question plays in Turkish politics. In that sense, the periphery comes to occupy the center, suggesting its long forgotten "subjectivity."

2.7. Self-Orientalism

The Orientalist tendencies of the state inevitably left its mark on the Kurds. As a term that was used by many scholars,[19] Self-Orientalism is a possible consequence of the above-discussed concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism. Yusuf Çiftçi (2013) adopts this term in his book *Self Oryantalizm ve Türkiye'de Kürtler* [*Self-Orientalism and the Kurds in Turkey*], which examines the case of the Kurds in Turkey from the perspective of that concept. He defines that concept as a distorted representation of one's own culture and identity by trying to explain it vis-à-vis Western values and according to the West (Çiftçi 2013: 29). Çiftçi looks at how self-Orientalism renders a culture or a state-ideology both as an agent and subject at the same time by examining both pre-modern and post-modern times. He also discusses how Self-Orientalism creates interaction in a similar way that Bayart draws attention to "carrier elites" (Bayart

[19] For an example, see Arif Dirlik (1996).

2011). In terms of spheres of interaction, Çiftçi also looks at education, trade, exile, etc. I argue that such an extended understanding as Çiftçi's, which encompasses both the advantages and the disadvantages of Turkish Orientalism, is more promising when one tries to understand the complexities at issue in the Kurdish case in Turkey. Although the Turkish state's ideology is informed by Western Colonialist and Orientalist perspective, the relationship between Kurds and the state cannot be reduced to the binary opposites of "colonizer" and "colonized." What I mean by this is that although Turkey's handling of the Kurdish Question is very much influenced by the Orientalists' approach, both the state and the Kurds have been influenced by each other. Demarcation played an important role in the state's construction of the Turkish identity. However, rather than designating a one-way construction of Turkish identity, I suggest that Turkish identity was created within/through the complexities and ambivalences that emerged in this process.

2.8. Evaluations and Conclusion

The specific consequences of the center and periphery cleavage have been studied by Laçiner (2005) and Göle (1999). Ömer Laçiner questions the specificity of that cleavage in the Turkish case and claims that the relations between center and periphery are common among different societies. In Turkey this relation is highly charged with tensions, with a high tone of hierarchy. In this sense, periphery in Turkey refers to something beyond the provinces that are politically dependent on the center (Laçiner 2005: 14-15), which he traces back to the Ottoman Empire. He conceptualizes this significant gap in the context of the ambition of the center to catch up with the rising power of the West and its attempt to come to terms with the challenges imposed by the West. In this context, while the western provinces were supportive of the center in its struggle to catch up with Western values and modernity, the Muslim population in the eastern provinces approached these developments with a certain reservation due to the reforms giving equal status to the minorities of the empire. Moreover, the warrantors of this equal status were "the Great powers" (Laçiner 2005: 16). When this reservation

came together with the socio-economic structure which cannot be easily integrated with this modern project and its ethnic composition, the eastern and southeastern provinces emerged as a double-periphery (Ibid 2005).

In light of the above-mentioned discussion, it is inevitable to argue that the Kurdish question should not be simply reduced to a national movement. Combination of dynamics such as Turkey's ambition for Western style modernism, its adoption of Orientalist methods, and its ambivalent reaction towards the hegemony of the West seems to have played an important role in the way the state formed its relationship with the Kurds. On the other hand, the Kurds seem to have developed their own way of reacting to handling this dynamic in the form of insurgency, the internalization of the values attributed to them as well as forming a new identity vis-à-vis the state.

Finally, I want to note that although I believe that Orientalism/Occidentalism, Center/Periphery are useful and underestimated concepts to understand the Kurdish question, I do not intend to suggest that this question can be reduced to these binaries. I believe that they are, however, effective tools to understand the power mechanism at play. In order to deconstruct these power mechanisms, one should keep an eye on seeing possible fissures that do not fit into these paradigms, in order not to fall into the trap of seeing the world in black and white. Last but not least, as I will try to argue more in detail in the following chapters, starting with the 1990s, the Kurdish Question also seems to have undergone a transition both in terms of what it is and how it is considered by the state elites in a way that suggests the kind of fissures I mentioned above.

CHAPTER 3

KEMALIST FEMINISM AND THE KURDISH WOMEN

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will attempt to explore how Kemalist women were envisioned by the Kemalist ideology as the "marker of the nation's modernity," which resulted in creating a group that is disintegrated from their Kurdish/eastern counterparts. This analysis will serve as the basis for the argument that Kurdish women have a twofold minority status as a group at the crossroads of these two "minority" categories; on the one hand, they were striped of their ethnic identity, and on the other, the fact that their Turkish counterparts in other regions could benefit from the Kemalist reforms aiming to improve the civic and potential status of women to a much greater extent, created a wide gap between Kurdish and Turkish Kemalist women (Yüksel 778).

On the other hand, this chapter will try to understand the formation of a distinct profile of the Kemalist "ideal woman" who is "in charge of" guarding Kemalist understanding of modernity and how this image of "ideal woman" serves, in turn, to the Kemalist ideology. In order to do that, it will consult the feminist literature on the Kemalist reforms targeting women. Considering that Kemalist women have a distinct identification with the Kemalist reforms and republican values, and that Kemalism

always took pride in its role in improvement of women's rights in Turkey, the formation process of this mutual relationship between Kemalist ideology and will be analyzed from the perspective of feminist literature in order to understand its strengths and weaknesses.

As a result, the relationship between the state's discourse and Kurdish women will be delineated to contextualize the discussion of Orientalism and Occidentalism presented in Chapter 2. In the first section of this chapter, I will investigate the history of the policies addressing women to situate the Kemalist project's "developmentalist" attitude toward, and in theconstruction of, the country's "East." A literature review of the critical reception of these policies by feminist scholars and a discussion of their impact on society, with particular emphasis on Kurdish women, follows. The second part of this chapter briefly analyzes *Dağ Çiçeklerim* [*My Mountain Flowers*], a posthumously published memoir by Sıdıka Avar, who worked as a teacher between 1939-1959 in various towns in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey. These towns were, and still are, places where Kurds form the majority of the population. Examining Avar's memoir as a case is significant, especially due to the author's claim that she was sent to these villages as a "Turkish missionary" upon Atatürk's personal behest.

3.1.1. The Role Attributed to Women by the Nationalist Project

Turkey is among the few countries that addressed the question of women's emancipation quite early, extensively, and explicitly. Steps taken to improve the status of women in Turkish Republic had almost always overlapped with the reforms to modernize the country. Hence, the Kemalist Revolution marked the peak of the process of Westernization for many pro-regime intellectuals (Azak 2010: 10). An example of this overlap is the Law of the Unification of Education in 1924, which was enacted on the same day with the abolishment of the Caliphate (Ibid: 10). The enactment of the Swiss Civil Code in 1926 within the first ten years following the official declaration of the republic gave political and civil rights to women that would change their social status, as with that new civil law their equality was recognized in law. It also outlawed polygamy and granted equal rights in demanding divorce to both women and men. In

the following years, reforms continued. Women in the Turkish Republic gained suffrage in 1934; earlier than women in many European countries.

Turkish republican policies addressing women took such a central place that they became one of the essential elements of the Republic of Turkey (Saktanber 2001). These reforms served the Kemalist ideology in various ways. In the first place, they served to establish a new image of being a part of the civilized Western world (Azak 2010: 11). That is, the fact that Kemalist reforms addressing women were put into practice marked that Turkey's place within the Western countries became a source of pride for Kemalists. Second, it created a group of "grateful" Kemalist women who were 'granted' rights (ostensibly without a fight). Atatürk envisaged the acknowledgment of women's rights "as a requirement for the establishment of democracy" (quoted in Arat 1998: 87). In this sense, Atatürk acknowledged women's rights insofar as they overlapped with the tenets of democratization. However, particularly the women who witnessed the formation period of the republic were grateful to Atatürk regardless of the problems that might arise from the limitations of this vision. One of these women who benefited from the Kemalist reforms, Hamide Topçuoğlu, became a leading sociologist of law, and expressed her gratitude to the republic as follows: "We conceptualized having a profession differently. Having a profession was not only earning our living. It was being of service to something, being successful. We will work even if we are fed by someone else. We will prove ourselves by our profession. *Atatürk emancipated women by giving them an assignment*" (quoted in Arat 1998: 88).[20] As Topçuoğlu's statement demonstrates, women who benefited from the reforms internalized the role of serving the modernization of the country and took pride in doing so. They actually grew a "platonic love [for the state]" (quoted in Özyürek 2008: 32), which lead Kemalist women to organize in non-governmental organization in the 1990s. Secondly, they perceived themselves to be the representatives of "Turkish women." These roles are best exemplified by women who support the CHP, which will be the basis of the analysis in Chapter 4.

[20] Translation and emphasis mine.

This character of the reforms, however, cannot be restricted to the case of Turkey. On the contrary, the "emancipation of women" signified much wider political and social steps towards modernity; many revolutionary and decolonizing projects, such as India and Yemen as well as in Turkey (Kandiyoti 1991). In many nationalist and modernizing projects, nation and gender are informed and constructed by each other, where women symbolize both the biological and cultural reproduction of the nation (Yuval-Davis 1997: 61). In the Turkish case, similarly, the biological and cultural reproduction of the nation, including its modern values, were invested upon the "ideal" Kemalist women.

3.1.2. Critical Reception of Kemalist Reforms: Symbolic Role of Women

According to sociologist Deniz Kandiyoti (1987), one noteworthy characteristic of the reforms is that "these rights were not obtained through the activities of women's movements, as in the case of Western women's struggle for suffrage, but were granted by an enlightened governing elite committed to the goals of modernization and 'Westernization'" (320). Yet, that women in Turkey did not personally struggle for their rights, as Kandiyoti once argued, is today not a commonly shared assessment. Şirin Tekeli contends that there was an active feminist movement between 1910 and 1920 in the Ottoman Empire, which she calls the first wave of feminism. Tekeli argues that the feminist women of this time were in fact very active in terms of their personal impacts on the role of women in society, particularly in their attempt to be an active part of the modernization process (Tekeli 1998). That women founded the first political party of the republic in 1921, namely Kadınlar Halk Fırkası (People's Party of Women), is testament to the extent of women's political agency during this time. This party was later transformed to an organization called Türk Kadın Birliği (Turkish Women Association) in 1924. However, this association was closed down in 1935 because it was considered to be "footloose" and "against national interests" by the government (Baykan and Ötüş-Baskett 1999). Overlooking, ignoring, or rejecting feminist movements in the Ottoman Empire served the founders of the Kemalist ideology, because constructing a history that was not democratic and "backward" made it easier

for them to champion their reforms more strongly. It was in fact an agenda geared towards thrusting the Kemalist reforms to the forefront. These very reforms made it possible for Kemalists and the state to take pride in being "modern," because women's rights were being developed and championed, and thus, the state was considered more modern and Western. By a simple symbolic gesture, Kemalists were equipped with a very effective instrument that could convey the very messages they wanted.

Although the close relationship between Turkish nationalism, modernism, and women's rights is a highly applauded theme in official discourse, it does not go uncontested. Many scholars, including Fatmagül Berktay, Ayşe Durakpaşa, Zehra F. Arat, Şirin Tekeli, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, and Ayşe Kadıoğlu have critically approached the effectiveness and quality of the Kemalist reforms on women's rights and emancipation. While some of them acknowledge the success of the reforms, others approach it from a more critical perspective. The critics contend that the Turkish republic's interest in women's rights was not driven solely by the motivation to emancipate women. Rather, these reforms were inextricably related to the motivation to modernize.

Among the group of scholars critical of the emancipation discourse of Turkish reforms, the symbolic employment of the image of women stands out as a shared theme in their works. While attributing importance to the question of women's rights as part of the project of founding a secular, modern, and nationalist republic, women became the emblem of political agendas in a way that risked the effectiveness of the reforms. Kandiyoti explains another facet of the motivation behind the aforementioned enthusiastic embrace of feminist policies, arguing alongside Peter Molyneux's assertion that "the policies geared towards women "may be seen a key to dismantling the old order" (in Kandiyoti 1987: 321). Molyneux's line of thought also bears witness to the Turkish case. In fact, Kemalists fervently sought to break the country's ties with its Ottoman past, employing women's emancipation as one of its main initiatives, especially in the earliest years of the republic, which presents a further instrumentalization of women's bodies and political subjectivities by writing them and thus implicating them specifically into the national project.

Concurring with Kandiyoti's argument, Nilüfer Göle taps into the emblematic role women played in the Turkish modernization project. She states that the republic gave public visibility to women (Göle 2004: 100) and women, in return, served the republic as the "new face" of its Westernization task. Göle goes on to suggest that the choice of the image of women is a subtle way of bringing visibility to an ideology, as it combines the symbols of being secular as opposed to being religious, progressive as opposed to "modern," and European as opposed to Middle Eastern. Depending on to what extent women are secular, "modern," or "western," the messages of modernness and westernness are conveyed; indeed a very critical part of constructing the Turkish identity. In this sense, women stood at the crossroads of many powerful ideologies. In other words, the semiotics of women conveyed the messages of the state's forming ideologies.

One question that justifiably arises is whether the emblematic handling of women in the creation of the secular Turkish Republic was unique to the Turkish case. Berktay and Kandiyoti contend that this method is far from being unique, and can also be observed in other Middle Eastern countries (Berktay 1998: 3; Kandiyoti 1987). An interesting characteristic about the emblematic role of women is the messages it conveys and then, the ways in which these messages are subsequently portrayed. In the Kemalist discourse carefully sculpted by the state, the image of the ideal Turkish woman did not exactly conform to the Western model. In contrast to the modern Western woman who was encouraged to leave the domestic sphere and enter the workspace, the modern Turkish woman should be "domestic" and "compassionate," but most of all, "chaste/modest"[21] (Kadıoğlu 1998). While dress codes became westernized and women's public visibility rose, women conveyed the message of being modern in a way that underscored a desire to be Western and their fear of being "alla Turca," while at the same time constructing a particular brand of the modern woman that differed from their Western counterpart.

[21] In the original text, this distinctive character of women is defined as "iffetli" whose exact meaning neither "modest" nor "chaste" conveys. "Iffet" rather refers to the virtue coming from being chaste. It also has the connotations of "de-sexuality" of women. I think, it is also charged with the representational role of women with regard to the family honor.

Finally, Ayşe Saktanber (2001) finds in her extensive analysis of the Kemalist discourse on women's rights that Kemalist reforms prioritized the achievement of women and men equally. Some examples that she presents include the way in which women from higher socio-economic circles had access to education and could be hired for prestigious jobs. However, women were still excluded from many decision-making positions, especially in public administration (Saktanber 2001). Hence, some of these reforms remained on the legal level and were not felt by some others in their daily lives. She also notes that this attitude towards women's rights were not only adhered to in the formative years of the republic, but were inherited by the policy makers who followed them in the 1950s and 1960s when Kemalists were not in control of the government. Some other very important reforms, on the other hand, were not in place until very recently. An example to them is the fact that women could gain the right to work without needing permission from their husbands only in the 1990s. They began to be employed in higher public positions only with the necessary amendments to the law.

Fatmagül Berktay most convincingly argues one of the greatest deficiencies of the Kemalist ideology regarding women's emancipation. Analyzing the semiotics of the Kemalist discourse, Berktay observes the way in which women emerge in its depictions. The leading nationalist and modernist men, instead of giving agency to women as political subjects, made use of women as a symbol in the dissemination of their ideology, rendering them the "object[s]" of these reforms rather than their "subject[s]" (Berktay 1998). As a result, the plausibility that these reforms were "emancipatory" is unlikely.

3.1.3. Double Marginalization: The Case of Kurdish Women

One of the commonly shared evaluations of many scholars is that women with urban bourgeois backgrounds stood out as those who benefited most from Kemalist reforms. On the one hand, there is a discrepancy between rural women and urban women, and on the other, between women in eastern and western Turkey. In this section, I will attempt to trace the political and cultural roots of these discrepancies,

focusing on the issue of the "backwardness" of eastern Turkey. I should note here that in the studies conducted up until the 2000s, the differences between the urban and rural regions of Turkey are studied to some extent, although analysis remains far from exhaustive. However, when talking about "eastern Turkey," more often than not the Kurds are implied. This fact remains to be ignored by scholars. The presence of Kurds in the eastern and southeastern regions is merely circumvented through the word "ethnic" difference, and is never openly discussed.[22]

Among the few scholars who focus on the conditions of eastern women, Yakın Ertürk's research can be helpful in understanding another facet of "backwardness" of the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey. In her examination of the modernization of eastern Turkey and rural women, Ertürk (1990) argues that in republican Turkey, the question of women was approached within the framework of the rights had been given to women by Atatürk's reforms. However, Kemalists have not profoundly questioned to what extent women could exercise these rights, which women could specifically benefit from them, and why. While the state and Kemalists have not not question the applicability of these reforms in different parts of the country, or for women with different experiences of womanhood, they have preferred to approach it solely from a reformist approach. In her examination of the "modern family" as a new regulatory discourse, Kandiyoti (1997) presents an insightful theory about the discourse of "underdevelopment." She states that, as with any other regulatory discourse, the ideal of the modern bourgeois family requires an Other that needs to be civilized. In a similar vein, normalizing certain articulations of sexuality and gender is based on the criticism and stigmatization of this Other. She further argues that modernizers can thus shape the image of their modern family by contrasting it to their Others, who are considered to be in need of reforms a priori (Kandiyoti 1997: 103). Another character of modernizers is overlooking the question of whether these structures they stigmatize exist in their own societies. The same process of othering and stigmatizing seems to have taken place in

[22] This analysis is based particularly on two compilations on women in Turkey. The first is "Women and Men in 75 years" [75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler], which is a book that critically approaches to the republican women policies in the 75th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The second is "Women in Turkey in the 1980s from the Perspective of Women" [1980'ler Türkiyesi'nde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar." There are 26 articles in the former volume by leading feminist academicians. In the second volume, there are 19 articles. Among these scholars, only Yakın Ertürk pointed out the lack of a substantial examination of the eastern women's position in the studies on the share of rural women's workforce.

the form of the "underdeveloped" eastern women. As illustrated in Chapter 2, Kurds/easterners were constructed as the Other of the Turkish identity. Similarly, the urban elite women of the republican period, who benefited from the Kemalist reforms, perceived their Kurdish counterparts as "underdeveloped," because they needed, to borrow Makdisi's term, their own "proving grounds" for their own modern status.

It is probably this urge of creating homogeneity that justified the "top-down" nature of the implementation of the reforms, which constitutes one of the major problems of this ideology in and of itself. As are all experiences, women's experiences are far from being homogeneous, just as the conditions in different regions are different due to their own particular structural elements. In a similar way, Ertürk states that "when we are talking about the modernization of eastern Turkey, we inevitably talk about the integration of the eastern region with the market economy. Yet, this process entails the reproduction of traditional structures against a particular socio-economic backdrop. In this sense, it is far from being a "technical process" unlike the expectations of the state. In my estimation, what Ertürk refers to as the "technical process" is the state's expectation that once the reforms are in place, they should apply to the region in the expected way. However, when the traditional structure conflicts with the state-designed structure, the success of the reforms become endangered. Ertürk portrays women in the eastern parts as follows:

> Most women over 30 years old in the region do not speak Turkish, and most of them get married through Islamic religious marriage [religious ceremony] and can claim neither inheritance nor their children in the face of modern/secular laws. Many do not even "officially" exist because they are not even registered in the centralized population system. These women are becoming increasingly marginalized as a result of the process of national integration or modernization, and fall into a category of defenseless targets against the new institutions and mechanisms brought on by the state. In this case it is only possible to sustain their assets vis-à-vis local power relations. Thus, the dependence of women on men in the East and men on other men (like the Ağa, Şıh, tribal reign) is consolidated by a/the modern/secular structure.[23] (Ertürk 1990: 180)

[23] Translation mine.

This quotation very clearly demonstrates the clash referred to above. The traditional structures are the practices such as an "imam nikahı" [Islamic religious marriage] and the reality that in this region people speak Kurdish. However, the state rejects the latter's reality. In the case of imam marriage, we can say that the state approaches it with toleration despite it being unofficial. However, the approach that creates reforms without looking at the consequences, results in marginalizing women; unless these hegemonic structures are acknowledged, the problems they create cannot be resolved. More importantly, not acknowledging these structures can lead to the reproduction and/or consolidation them, although they are intended to be removed from society. Ertürk further evaluates the consequences of this clash between reality and the law in the following way:

> The consequences of changes in power relations and in the legal/cultural scene for the daily struggles of women have not yet been systematically examined. In this respect, the process of economic/political integration creates very contradictory situations in the East, particularly for women living in Kurdish villages, depriving them of their traditional forces by pushing them into struggles they are unfamiliar at time[24] (Ertürk 1990: 180).

What Ertürk refers to by the "traditional forces of women" entails complementarity of the division of labor between women and men, especially in the rural settings. Based on her research on eastern women, Ertürk argues that women gain a distinct power through the complementarity of the tasks they perform in the rural context. However, an evaluation of rural development projects proves that they are far from satisfactorily acknowledging women's unique methods of empowerment in eastern and southeastern regions (Ertürk 1995: 146-149). The reports that were carried out under the State Planning Organization (SPO), almost without an exception, emphasize conventional women's tasks and ignore production-oriented tasks of women—even the ones with a gender component. In that sense, efforts to reduce regional disparities cannot satisfactorily address the issue at stake, because they conceptualize the structure in these regions, first, as underdeveloped, and second, as immutable.

[24] Translation mine.

3.2. Orientalist Tendencies of Kemalist Women

On a more theoretical level, while the problems that Kemalists depict about women in the eastern and southeastern regions of the country might be loosely based on an accurate evaluation, the hegemonic "othering" that it incurs makes this discourse problematic. Secondly, with the help of this discourse, Kemalist nationalism constructs the women in the eastern parts of Turkey as, borrowing Mesut Yeğen's terms, "Prospective-Turks" (Yeğen 2009), or potential "to-be-emancipated" subjects—subjects always attempting to arrive at, yet perpetually deferred a priori from, modern liberation. This problematic approach attributes superiority to the Kemalist tutelage over the "inferior" Kurds in general, and Kurdish women more in particular. Hence, as Metin Yüksel accurately argues, Kurdish women have been exposed to a "double marginalization" (Yüksel 2006: 777-802). For, as he argues, two dimensions of Kemalist policies come together and result in the "dismantling of the Kurdish ethnic identity concomitant with the 'emancipation' of Turkish women" (777). On the one hand, "their ethnic identity was severely crushed and on the other hand they became relatively disadvantaged and underprivileged compared to their Turkish counterparts who were potentially able to benefit from the secularizing and modernizing Republican reforms" (777). Yüksel goes on to say that this discrepancy between Kurdish women and their Turkish counterparts resulted in a wide social status gap between the two parties.

The Kemalist attitude that enforces top-down legislations, ignoring the realities and specificities of certain groups, regions, etc. has been a characteristic of state reforms in Turkey that started with the Kemalist reforms and continues today. Rather than expecting the laws to penetrate into the social sphere, the regulations that vary from one region, one ethnic group, or sect to another gain importance in the context of Turkey, whose regulations remained very restricted in terms of their prevalence in different regions of the country. More importantly, considering the above-mentioned conditions in eastern Turkey, the rhetoric of the "backward" east obscures the sociopolitical reasons underlying this fact by breaking its ties with the problematic implementation of the western style civil code in Turkey. The problems women

experience in the region is solely attributed to regional specificities and "backwardness" without considering their direct relation as responses to state ideology.

In her examination of the "modern family" as a new regulatory discourse, Kandiyoti (1997) presents an insightful theory about the discourse of "underdevelopment." She states that, as with any other regulatory discourse, the ideal of the modern bourgeois family requires an Other that needs to be civilized. In a similar vein, normalizing certain articulations of sexuality and gender is based on the criticism and stigmatization of this Other. She further argues that modernizers can thus shape the image of their modern family by contrasting it to their Others, who are considered to be in need of reforms a priori (Kandiyoti 1997: 103). Another character of modernizers is overlooking the question of whether these structures they stigmatize exist in their own societies. The same process of othering and stigmatizing seems to have taken place in the form of the "underdeveloped" eastern women. As illustrated in Chapter 2, Kurds/easterners were constructed as the Other of the Turkish identity. Similarly, the urban elite women of the republican period, who benefited from the Kemalist reforms, perceived their Kurdish counterparts as "underdeveloped," because they needed, to borrow Makdisi's term, their own "proving grounds" for their own modern status.

3.2.1. The Role of Education

As the desired developments with regard to women's rights have been considered an inextricable part and an indicator of Turkey's modernization and Westernization, the question was reduced to that of extending these policies to larger masses, particularly by the means of education. Mass-schooling was one of the main activities of the Turkish Republic in its formative years. While it seems to be devoid of ideology's mark at first glance, education, is in fact a powerful tool for shaping and altering formation of an individual in society as well as in the public realm. It carries the potential of indoctrinating people for or against political systems (Kaplan 1999: 12). As in other projects of nationalism, education was productively used in the establishment of Turkish nationalism.While the discourse of the state was to empower women across the

country, education was also instrumentalized in the dissemination of the image of a modern Turkey (Saktanber 2001). In eastern provinces, on the other hand, the role of education was geared both toward Turkification and the civilizing mission. Having given a theoretical background for the formation of a Kemalist figure of ideal modern woman, I would like to exemplify it with a case study where the civilizing mission of Kemalist women *par excellence* is at work. *Dağ Çiçeklerim* (2004) [My Mountain Flowers] by Sıdıka Avar might serve here as an example of Turkification policies through education as well as the beginning of the "backwardness" of Kurds.

3.2.2. *Dağ Çiçeklerim*

Sıdıka Avar was born in 1901 in Istanbul. She studied at the Çapa Teacher School. After she graduated in 1922, she started to work as a Turkish teacher at İzmir American Girls' College in 1925. In 1939 she was appointed to the Elazığ Girls' Institute. Between 1939 and 1943, she worked in various cities in the eastern and southeastern provinces until she became a principal at the Elazığ Girls' Institute in 1949. She witnessed twenty years of eastern Anatolia. *Dağ Çiçeklerim* is her posthumously published memoir which she wrote in 20-year-period. According to the publisher, she was sent there as a "Turkish missionary." According to the book, the vast majority of her students were of Kurdish origin. Quotations from this book will serve as examples of instances when a Kemalist women meet eastern Turkey. According to her memories, she had a very idealist approach to the children she met, and she took action in order to improve their conditions. She especially tried to prevent the mistreatment of the children who studied at the boarding school. Yet, the stance of the other personnel in the school is an example of the general opinion of Kurds being "backward," and shows the accumulation of hatred towards due to the disobedience of Kurds.

During her first months, Avar is surprised by a peculiar situation. Children of the state officials study in the institutes while the children of the villagers study at the boarding house. Avar points out many times the hierarchy between these two groups by telling that "Institute students are always belittling the boarding school students; the

boarding school students, on the other hand, always have an inferiority complex" (Avar 2004: 28). In her explanation of this inferiority complex, she illustrates their physical destitution and dilapidation because of the lack of care from the teachers and janitors, as Avar finds out later. Moreover, the janitors make boarding school students work in the kitchen and clean the school, etc. When Avar finds about this, she protests and tries to take action against it.

One of the most striking themes behind the memoir is Turkification, which is expressed in a stunningly unequivocal way. "Most of them are the girls of the villages where the incidents of rebellion were experienced. Beautiful, ugly, or rebellious…They are all human after all," the readers get the impression that Avar was approaching the girls purely with compassion. However, when it is followed by "These wounded hearts should be treated with love and compassion and should be integrated with *Turkishness*" (Avar 2004, 33), it turns out that this approach was in fact a strategy to carry through the goal of Turkifying these Kurdish girls. Avar very clearly defines herself as a "Turkish missionary" whose primary mission is to assimilate Kurdish children into the Turkish identity. As a teacher of Turkish, her task had foremost importance. The importance of Turkish came from the fact that not knowing it was considered to be the reason for poverty: "Atatürk said that in these mountain villages all poverty came from not knowing Turkish and he saw it as one of the reasons of rebellion. Therefore, he wanted Turkish to be introduced to these villagers with 'mothers'. This was the most permanent education" (Avar 2004: 33).

The children are called "mountain children" by the janitors and other teachers at school with the suggestion that they are not affected by cold or mistreatment, unlike urban children (Avar 2004: 36). When Avar finds out that the janitors make the children work, the response of the janitor is also significant in emphasizing the "mountain" theme. Avar asks if carrying wood or cleaning the rooms are not the responsibility of the janitors. The janitor answers: "Of course they will do these tasks. These are the offsprings of the rebellious Kurds, they are mountain bears" (Avar 2004: 39). Although Avar does not note her own response, in general she does not react against it. She just tries to treat children properly herself and improve their conditions by ensuring that they get their proper share when food is served. In other instances, she tries to intervene in

the mistreatment of the rest of the staff.[25] However, her primary concern is rather about the integration of the children to the Turkish nationality than mistreatment, which is disclosed the moment she says "how are these children supposed to be integrated to the Turkish identity against these kinds of harsh punishments?." (Avar 2004: 46).

The last quote I want to add is about the moment when Avar is appointed as the principal of another girl's school. The current principal explains Avar's new role at that schools as "Now as the Turkish Missionary, you will assimilate the boarding school students. This is at Atatürk's own behest. It would offend the local public if you let anyone feel this. Be cautious accordingly." And Avar reassures herself by saying: "Did I not study at the Gazi Education Institute for that objective?" (Avar 2004: 47).

There are certain themes that I want to invoke regarding the quotes from *Dağ Çiçeklerim*. The first one of these is the very obvious task of Turkification. The Kurds are considered to be "prospective-Turks" who need to be integrated into that culture with the compassion of a 'mother' like Sıdıka Avar. As Avar herself notes, she was educated for the task of Turkification at the Gazi Education Institute, suggesting that this is the cultural policies that the state implements at educational institutions. In that sense, during her education Avar and other teachers, especially women, were trained to be 'mothers' who are responsible for the construction of a homogeneous national identity.

Motherhood has another significance in the context of Kemalist women discourse. In the early republican years, there was an emphasis on "motherhood" which expressed itself in many of Atatürk's speeches. For example, "The greatest mission is motherhood. When it is acknowledged that the lap of a mother is where the first education is given, the importance of that responsibility is better understood" (Toska 1998: 79). What the quotes from *Dağ Çiçeklerim* illustrate is that the role of motherhood was not restricted to the borders of family, but was expanded with the inclusion of conveying the new nation's values as well as the new Turkish identity in various parts of the country. The fact that the eastern parts were in a political turmoil

[25] In her comprehensive study on Dağ Çiçeklerim, Zeynep Türkyılmaz demonstrates how some of Avar's memoirs contradict the accounts of her students.

due to the outbursts of rebellions by Kurdish communities necessitated a special treatment of these territories. In that sense, the role of education acquired another meaning in eastern regions. This role can be put on a par with the "White Man's Burden" when one considers the treatment of the other teachers and janitors in Avar's memoir. Kurds, as "Mountain Turks," should be taught the "truth" about their origins and education, in the first place, served that end. This mission was accorded to educated Kemalist women. They were expected to make use of their maternal feelings towards children, which carries a particular importance. On the one hand, assimilation would take place with a subtlety. On the other hand, women would play an instrumental role in the construction of the Turkish nation yet again.

The motif of "The White Women's Burden" comes into the scene in the memoir once more when the role of Turkish language is defined. When Avar thinks about Atatürk's explanation of the "underdevelopment" and "poverty" of eastern regions, which Avar seems to agree with, Turkish emerges as the criterion of development, which is problematic in every sense of the word. When they learn Turkish, the road to development will open up once and for all. Within that equation, the civilizing mission that Avar assumes is justified, because the correction of the problems that arise from the language was for the benefit of the region. This is quite similar to how Orientalism works on the level of discourse. Orientalism, as I explained more in detail in Chapter 2, is a "system of knowledge about the Orient" (Said 1978: 6), which assumes the authoritative role of representing the Orient without making reference to the reality. The Orient, from the perspective of Orientalists, should be represented and guided for their own good.

The discourse revolving around the need for guidance provided the Orientalists the discursive tools of justifying their deeds. In a similar way, Kemalist discourse first stigmatized its own east as being destitute and poor, because it was subservient to its goals of Turkification. Kurdish, even without uttering it, is suggested to be the language of underdevelopment, which emerges as the exact opposite of the language of civilization, that is, Turkish. This process eventually creates the "relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (Said 1978: 5). For, during the process stigmatization of Kurds and Kurdish and set apart from the rest of the

country, simultaneously Turkish and Turkish nationality is constructed in a way that suggests its progressive character, and association with modernity and Western values. Finally, I should note that this process of national identity formation testifies to the idea that "Nationalist projects are simultaneously gender projects" (quoted in Zeydanlıoğlu 2008). In Chapter 4, my discourse analysis of Kemalist women will be based on that argument, because I contend that especially in the early years of the republic, women played an important role in the dissemination of Turkish nationalism. Related to their significant role in Turkish nationalism, their stance towards Kurds acquires special importance.

CHAPTER 4

KEMALIST DISCOURSES ON KURDISH WOMEN IN THE 1990s

4.1. The Political, Social, and Cultural Framework of the 1990s

This chapter will explore the problematic employment of Orientalist and Occidentalist discourses about the Kurdish population in the context of the 1990s. My main point of departure in choosing the 1990s was the rise of the Kurdish nationalist movement which challenged the "homogeneity" discourses of Kemalist nationalism. What makes the 1990s salient is the fact that it was a time when the state was forced to come to terms with the rising challenge of radical Islamic and Kurdish nationalist movements in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état (Göle 1999). The PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party) waged an armed struggle against Turkish forces beginning in 1984 for the recognition of the Kurdish population. The specificity of the 1990s lies in the fact that the Kurdish national movement in the 1990s brought an unprecedented visibility and, I argue, marked an historical moment of reversal, as political actors holding important positions started to publicly express their Kurdish origins. One striking example of those instances is the prime minister Turgut Özal's public statement in 1991 that his grandmother is probably of Kurdish origin. This statement took place under relatively less "negotiable" conditions of claiming or disproving Kurdish origins than

before this time. Before, Kurds were enthusiastically integrated into society as a major part of social engineering projects, yet with the primary condition of denying the existence of a distinctive Kurdish identity. Özal's meeting with the Northern Iraqi leaders Barzani and Talabani was another taboo-breaking/iconoclastic moment. Not surprisingly, this meeting created an uproar in the public arena and was criticized harshly by Özal's opponents on the grounds that he was not taking conventional external policies into account (Aydın and Yüksel 2014: 396). When compared to the Law of 2932 which banned speaking Kurdish issued by the military military government in 1983, these statements by leading politicians in the 1990s illustrates the softening of the Kurdish question, at least on a discursive level.

In the political arena, the CHP remained suspended from 1981-1992 after the military rule banned all political parties. In the interim, the Kemalists were represented by two political parties: the DSP (Democratic Leftist Party) and the SHP (Social-Democratic Populist Party) although these parties underwent certain separations as well as unifications, which I will not delve into due to the limits of the thesis. With specific regard to the Kurdish question, the SHP's decision to nominate Kurdish deputies on the lists of southeastern cities in the election of 1991, marks an important point in the political history of Turkey (Aydın and Taşkın 2014). However, this attempt to have Kurdish representation in parliament failed when these Kurdish deputies went to take their oath in the parliament, which resulted in chaos among the Turkish Public, leading to the eventual resignation of the deputies (Göle 1999: 55). Against this backdrop, in 1992, the CHP reopened and started to once again represent the Kemalists while the DSP also catered to Kemalist ideology.

Taking these paradigms into account, an analysis of the Kemalists' (as well as the state's) discourse on Kurdish women in the 1990s would reveal, firstly, to what extent the discussions in earlier chapters apply to the 1990s, and secondly, to what extent the impasse created in Turkish society by Occidentalism and Orientalism has been overcome. I consider the CHP pamphlet[26] on "Being a Woman in Southeast Anatolia" to be at the nexus of all the paradigms the present thesis engages. Drawing on

[26] This pamphlet will be referred as CHP from now on within in-text references.

Fatmagül Berktay's insightful argument that the complications arising from the polarization between the eastern and western regions of Turkey are symbolically projected onto gender identities, I would like to explore whether the above-mentioned polarization created by an Orientalist perspective was symbolically reflected in the relationship between Kemalist women and eastern/Kurdish women (Berktay 2003). Secondly, I would like to question whether the same tendency in Orientalizing Kurdish women was at work in the 1990s or whether Kemalist women were trying to go beyond the discourses of "an underdeveloped" eastern and southeastern region.

4.2. Background of the CHP Women's Branch

The Republican People's Party was the first party to organize women's branches in Turkey. Preparation for the foundation of this branch started with the changes made in the CHP constitution in the 1950s, which allowed the formation of separate organizations at the provincial level (Çadır 2011: 55). The functioning of the CHP's Women's Branch was interrupted during the 1980 coup d'état, which suspended all political parties at the time. However, the Women's Branch tried to continue its operations through women's committees.

In the CHP Women's Branch Constitution, the aim of establishing women's branches was defined as follows: "To make the CHP more widely adopted among various sections of the society, especially women, to spread the rules of procedure, the Program Decision, the Declaration of Election, the decisions of the Grand Congress, the principles and policies set by the Party Parliament, to contribute to the participation of women as free and equal individuals in all spheres of social life, in the family and working life [and] in politics" (CHP 2015: 195).[27] However, this branch is defined as a subsidiary to the main body of the political party (ibid: 197). Since 1997, the CHP has adopted the election-based principle for the appointment of provincial women's branch

[27] Although this quotation is from a very recent CHP legislation, it seems as if these articles are kept intact since the foundation of the branch. At least, the earliest version of that regulation dated to 2001 and there are no differences between the 2015 and 2001 version.

organizations as well as the head of the women's branch. However, this principle contradicts the rules regarding the "dismissal" of the people in charge of organizing the women's branches. This rule states that the women's branch organizations can be dismissed by the CHP administrations of the same level or by women's branches from upper levels of the organization. A poignant example of this was true for Güldal Okuducu in 2007. Okuducu was the leader of the CHP's women's branch when the CHP pamphlet was issued in 1998. The significance of this contradiction for the analysis of the CHP pamphlet lies in the fact that Okuducu was dismissed by the party leaders in 2007, which demonstrates how women who are active in the women's branch can be sidelined unlike other members of the party. This dismissal can be symbolically important in the evaluation of the pamphlet, as I will illustrate later.

4.2.1. The CHP Pamphlet on Kurdish Women

The CHP's Women's Branch planned to organize the Regional Women's Congress in 1998 with the contention that the economic, social and cultural conditions throughout the country were different regionally, and thus had different impacts on the standards and styles of life. The aims of such congresses were to attend to the voice of the "locals," their demands and concerns (CHP pamphlet: Being a Women in Southeastern Anatolia, 5). The first session of these women's congresses took place on February 21, 1998 in Siirt, a city in southeastern Anatolia. The committee organized door-to-door visits to the most remote parts of the city. Based on this congress, the Women's Branch issued the pamphlet that I will analyse here. It should be noted, however, that these congresses did not take place in other regions despite the original plan. As the pamphlet published makes clear, the topic published immediately was the one on southeastern women, suggesting the urgency of the situation.

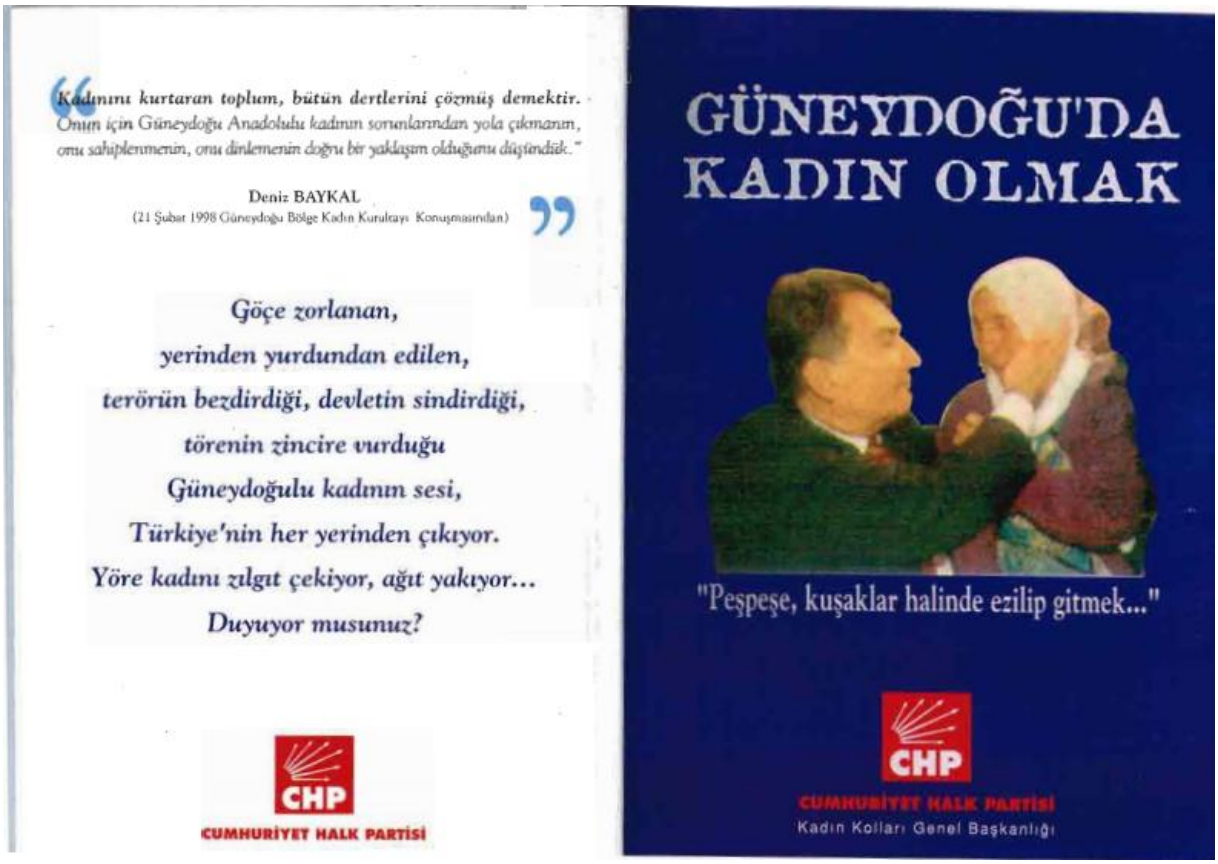


Figure 1. The cover page of the CHP pamphlet.

Before embarking on a discourse analysis of the pamphlet, I would also like to draw its outline and make a brief comment on its structure. The pamphlet opens with a picture that shows the CHP leader, Deniz Baykal, touching the face of a "stereotypical," veiled woman (See Picture 1). The image conveys a feeling of intimacy to the audience. However, the only picture included in the pamphlet is the one that depicts the male leader of the party, Deniz Baykal. There is no visual that demonstrates the door-to-door visits of women, which is surprising considering the fact that both the congress and the pamphlet are the results of the women's branch's efforts. The picture that portrays Baykal and the typical elderly woman conveys all too well the message of a compassionate and embracing political leader. This message of compassion is

reinforced with the timidity and weakness in the woman's eyes. These messages are put into words by the informal subtitle of the picture which reads "To be oppressed one after the other, generation by generation…"[28] While the word "oppression," which is a stronger word choice then "suppression" as it is tended to be used in women's problems, implies the difference of Kurdish/eastern women's problems and experiences of the rest of women. Oppression also emphasizes the physicality of the mistreatment in contrast to the less physical and more emotional word of suppression, which might be invoking the typical image of high domestic violence in the region, thereby featuring women's body. The oppression's quality, going on "generation by generation," on the other hand, refers to longevity, almost giving it a sense of immutability-echoing both the formative year's reports and the CHP Report on Eastern and Southeastern Regions published in January 1999.

The pamphlet consists of five chapters, which focus on marriage and family life, educational problems, health problems, working life problems, and a closing chapter devoted to the media coverage of the congress organized on February 21, 1998. The first point that draws one's attention in these chapters is the choice of words that invoke emotions, as is the case with the subtitle of "to be oppressed one after the other, generation after generation." The opposite page is designed almost in the form of verse, whose lines rhyme with each other. In that sense, from the first pages on, the pamphlet gives the impression that it breaks its ties with the previous formal reports on the region. While the earlier reports were predominantly of an informative nature, this pamphlet prepared by women addresses the emotions by creating a rich atmosphere of regional women ululating and lamenting for their losses, which, perhaps, can be explained by the gender of the authors.

The pamphlet is designed in a format that makes abrupt transitions in form and tone ranging from a party propagandist approach to a lyric tone embroidered with rhetorical questions;It calls for attending to the plight of women under the "oppression of terror, unemployment, under-education, men, violence" as early as the very first page. In an abrupt transition, it jumps to statistical data from the regional development

[28] "Peşpeşe, kuşaklar halinde ezilip gitmek...." in its original.

administration's "Research on Women's Status and Integration into the Development Process" conducted in 1994 by the Turkish Development Foundation. This statistical data on the sociological level, however, is made consistent with the surrounding lyric and dramatic tone by the titles on quote (from whom they are quoted remains yet to be answered, though I gather that it is the "voice" of the pamphlet).

Having provided an outline of the structure and tone of the pamphlet, I will now embark on an analysis of certain themes that come to the fore within the discussion of the new facet of the Orientalism/Occidentalism of Kemalist ideology in the 1990s. In doing so, I would like to analyze the faultlines of the discourses articulated in it, in order to locate them within the larger framework of Kemalist ideology in the 1990s vis-à-vis Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish women in particular. Methodologically, it should also be noted that I do not intend to refer to the Kemalists as if they were a monolithic group. Yet, in order to present an analysis of the pamphlet in question, throughout the paper, I will approach the pamphlet as if it represented the basic convictions and tenets of Kemalism while keeping my reservations toward such a simplified stance.

4.2.2. Regional Disparities Revisited: Western and Eastern Women's Experiences

Throughout the pamphlet's chapters, the educational, health, domestic, and employment issues of southeastern women are located within the larger scene of a destitute southeastern Anatolia. The way these topics are handled in the pamphlet very much echoes earlier portrayals of the region, that emphasize insufficiency in the infrastructure, societal underdevelopment, and feudalism. Numerous similar portrayals of the eastern and southeastern regions range from various reports submitted to the state in the early republican period[29]According to the pamphlet, educational levels are low, unemployment is high, and health services are insufficient.[30] Geographic challenges and terror brought about migration from the region. Still, the population growth rate is two times higher than the country's average due to the extended family tradition. The feudal

[29] A detailed study on these regions in the early republican period is presented in *Doğu Anadolu ve Cumhuriyet Bürokrasisi* [Eastern Anatolia and Republican Bureacracy], ed. Tuba Akekmekçi and Muazzez Pervan (2011) based on a a deputy who served in the eastern Anatolia, Necmettin Sahir Sılan's archive.

[30] http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/chp-kurt-raporu.pdf

system that is characterized by the *agha* system and tribes, claims the pamphlet, has been kept intact, resulting in poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. The *Töre* (mores) and the feudal system of the region entails polygamy, extended family, kin marriages, religious (non-official) marriages, philoprogenitiveness, and domestic violence, among other problems. The pamphlet portrays the women of the region as victims of the accumulation of these dimensions. Similarly, it suggests that these characteristics of the region also account for underdevelopment. All of these portrayals echo both the formative year's reports and the CHP Report on Eastern and Southeastern Regions published in January 1999.

The first fallacy of the pamphlet derives from its reluctance to assign a historicity that acknowledges the specifics of the region. It does not specify a timeframe. It does not portray certain differences or changes from one period of time to another. It just contends that women are being oppressed "generation after generation" and "one after the other." The pamphlet also breaks up the inherent relationship between the region's problems and the way reforms were carried out. The centralized state in the republican period adopted a top-down method of putting the reforms into practice, which had its impact on the composition of society. What I refer to here is the uneven implementation or reception of the reforms in different regions of the country. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the aftermath of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, several reforms were made regarding women ranging from the adoption of the Turkish civil code inspired by the Swiss Civil Code to the outlawing of polygamy,to granting equal rights to women and men to permitting women to take the custody of children. The disparities in terms of implementation and reception of the reforms apply equally to the success of the reforms geared toward women. There were great disparities between regions in terms of the reforms' success. Deniz Kandiyoti critically observes the following:

> It is a fact that Kemalist reforms remained a dead issue for a long time, especially in those rural areas most weakly integrated into the national economy. The avoidance of civil marriage in favor of the religious ceremony, with the related possibility of polygamy, repudiation, and illegitimacy; the marriage of underage girls; the demand for "baslik parası" (brideprice) in the marriage contract; the denial of girls' rights to education; and the emphasis on women's fertility were continuing signs

> of the uneven socio-economic development of the country. (Kandiyoti 1987: 322)

Success in the application of those reforms did not apply to all women in the country as was demonstrated in the third chapter. The reason behind this is the fact that the reforms regarding women were not received evenly by all women in the country. While the urban bourgeoisie could effectively benefit from them, rural women's experiences did not change for a long time, creating a cleavage—or rather consolidating a split that already existed—in the country in terms of women's experiences (Kandiyoti 1987: 322). Kandiyoti is not the only one who notices the exclusive success of the reforms for women. Umut Azak also interprets the same selectivity on the basis of access to education (Azak 2010: 11). From Azak's perspective, the point that needs to be emphasized is not how deeply this region is underdeveloped, but rather why it is. The process of structuring the region as solely underdeveloped defines what the region is. In a similar vein, while the urban bourgeoisie began to be presented as the "modern" and "secular" face of the republic, women in the countryside, especially in the eastern and southeastern regions, are labeled as the locus of "backwardness."

Considering the extent to which these reforms were applied to different spheres of society, the two sides of the pole were the urban bourgeois women, who had generally been represented by the CHP—and who, in return, represented CHP, as discussed in the third chapter—and rural women. Yet, this is not to claim that women in the same social class had the same experiences, nor that these categories represent homogenous experiences of womanhood. Here I aim to point to the two edges of the pole and acknowledge the variation of these experiences, as a way of pointing out that urban bourgeoisie women came to be associated with western values, secularism, and modernity over time, while rural women who had to preserve the existing experiences of womanhood, to a larger extent, came to be associated with religiosity, "backwardness," and the "East." The pamphlet stands at the point of encounter between these two poles. It is, then, important to question to what extent the authors of this CHP pamphlet can go beyond the euphemisms such as underdevelopment and victimhood.

On a statistical level, the explanations of the victimhood of southeastern women are supposedly supported by the statistics that compare the figures in the southeast with those of the average overall in Turkey. The discrepancy between the average rate of female "victimhood" in Turkey and the average in the region is unfairly magnified. Even if such a comparison would reveal "underdevelopment" in the region, a more credible and consistent comparison would require a comparison with other regions of the country as well. The authors of the pamphlet could also have adopted an approach that follows basic research methods such as looking at a dependent variable against an independent variable. Otherwise, the underdevelopment of the region remains a sticky and unsubstantiated discourse that reduces the region only to the sweeping generalizations that have been haunting the state discourse since CUP social engineering, which had its impact on all the development reports on the eastern and southeastern regions.

4.2.3. The Civilizing Mission: Has Anything Changed?

In the 1990s, the Kurdish question addressed through a depoliticized policy discourse revolving around "regional development" by the state (Ayata and Yükseker 2005, 6). The towns and cities predominantly inhabited by the Kurdish population were considered to be the least developed in the country. Even prior to the 1990s, the Turkish state had already started to cling to the discourse of underdevelopment more strongly in the Kurdish regions, embarking on the Southeastern Anatolian Development Project (GAP) in the 1980s (extending to the 1990s)—an extension of the "developmental" approach to the eastern and southeastern regions' problems.

Delving further into these developmentalist approaches and the rise of the armed national Kurdish struggle takes us to the even more profound background of the internal displacement of the Kurds both in the big cities as well as on the peripheries of eastern cities. Although the figures vary by source, according to the official parliamentary investigation report in 1998, it is estimated that 378,335 people were internally displaced in the Kurdish-populated southeastern and eastern provinces of Turkey in the

1990s during the "low-intensity conflict" between the Turkish state and the Kurdish guerillas (Ayata and Yükseker 2005). Yet the figures reported by certain human rights organizations are more drastic: the estimates go as high as three million people (Ayata and Yükseker 2005). In addition, according to the UNHCR's paper on "Voluntary Repatriation of Turkish Refugees" (Ayata and Yükseker 2005), approximately 13,000 people fled to northern Iraq. What follows from this internal displacement is a new kind of visibility for Kurdish women. That is, eastern women and the problems they experience come to the surface as a more pressing issue than before. During this volatile period, the Kurdish population and Kurdish women encountered the urban population and urban women, especially in metropols like Istanbul. Within that context the two poles, urban Kemalist women and rural Kurdish women, gain a ground of confrontation.

This confrontation is made possible through the migration wave. Migration from eastern regions to metropols was already taking place by the 1990s, mostly because of economical motivations, i.e. finding a job in an urban setting. However, with the terror reigning in the eastern and southeastern regions, migration began to be driven by two additional reasons, because people in the eastern and southeastern regions were subjected to internal relocation for political reasons throughout the 1990s. Internal relocation took place in two different ways: the first wave was a result of threats from security forces, the PKK, and government-employed security guards; the second was compelled by the feeling of insecurity due to armed clashes and military-imposed food embargoes. Faced with the turmoil in these regions, migration from the eastern and southeastern regions gained a new meaning for the inhabitants of urban setting: encounter with groups of people from the peripheries of the country.

This encounter lends itself to one of the pamphlet's most intriguing parts. Migration is invoked in the CHP pamphlet many times. The reason for this migration wave is acknowledged to be out of "necessity" when it is invoked as "[women who are] forced to migrate" (3). However, a frustration embedded in this acknowledgement is disclosed in the instances where the pamphlet poses the rhetorical question of (10), "do you live in your *own* country, [eastern women]?" (12). Here, the sense of "not being in your own country" is conveyed. The last quotation from the pamphlet is poignant in demonstrating the "white women's burden": "The people who migrate to the cities, the

ones who come with their own burdens, are now also the problem of urban people." However, it is Orientalist discourse that is reconciled with the following sentence: "Women from the countryside and women from the cities will undergo and overcome this problem together."

Evaluations of these displacements reveal the "orientalist" attitude of Kemalists ideology, but also the way they attempt to overcome it. The authors first note the migration from this region, generalizing the southeastern region as "this region" and not specifying it as Siirt, to the urban centers, calling for a comprehensive transformation both in the region and in the places where its population relocated—generally the periphery of capital cities or city centers of the region. Integration programs are necessary to streamline the flow of immigration if it cannot be prevented. Integration programs, they argue, should include cultural and social projects. The peripheries ("varoşlar") should be considered together as Southeast Anatolia, and they should be "enlightened" as a whole (CHP 1998: 14) The word choice of "enlightening" is significant here, as it first establishes the authors and their position as a norm, and then calls for a progressive change in the direction of that norm. The agenda of "enlightenment" bears a striking resemblance to Orientalism and its "civilizing mission" that Zeydanlıoğlu cogently expresses:

> [W]hen nationalist elites project the internalized Orientalism "inwards" as part of the nation-building process, the "native" emerges as an Other that becomes the target of "corrective" and "scientific" projects of modernity and process. The transformation of the native is undertaken through a return to the "disciplinary" narratives of the West (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008: 3).

The second chapter briefly exemplified the "corrective" and "modernizing" projects of the type of modernity that the Kemalists envisioned. A newer version of the same project was at work in the context of the rapid relocation of the Kurds in urban settings, because this encounter reminds the elites of their "civilizing mission." Once again, the elites attribute a representational right and leadership role to themselves in the process, from which they emerge as "modern" and "progressive."

Hence, we observe a constant emphasis on the "backwardness" of the Southeast, for which, repetitively, the "traditions" and the "feudal system" are made responsible.

The constant emphasis, I argue, is not only to invoke development in the region, but also differentiate the pamphlet's authors as different from their subjects. By doing so, they establish a hegemonic structure between themselves and the people they are researching.

Here I would like to quote certain parts of a report entitled "Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia's problems," which was originally published by the SHP in 1989 when Deniz Baykal was the general secretary of the party. When the SHP and the CHP united in 1995, the CHP decided to publish sections from this report, addressing the 'Eastern Question,' under the name of the CHP, because it was published by the SHP when Deniz Baykal, current leader of the CHP in 1995, was the general secretary of the SHP at that time. It begins by defining main challenges of Turkey:

> The main challenge that Turkey faces today is the removal of the constitutional and legal obstacles, institutionalization of democracy throughout the country, rapid development by industrialization, removal of social injustice and procurement of fair distribution of national income among people and territories.
>
> Both economic and social development and democracy are also the main objectives of SHP. It is unthinkable to put one in front of the other or to prioritize one over the other.
>
> Eastern and southeastern problems have a priority in the problems of the country. Human rights violations, terrorism and violence, economic backwardness, poverty, intense unemployment, insecurity and identity crisis are the main causes of these problems (SHP 1989/CHP 1995).

The difference in the stance of that report is that it does not limit itself acknowledge the problems reigning in the eastern and southeastern regions, but also acknowledge the complicity of the state in what was happening there. It clearly talks about the human rights violations and violence of the state, which had been unprecedented in the previous years. In that sense, it pioneers the movement that questions that stance of the state within the CHP.

The importance of that report also lies in the fact that it diverges from the rest of the reports on the eastern and southeastern provinces in that it clearly acknowledges a

distinct Kurdish language and culture: "In the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, a predominant part of the population is ethnically of Kurdish origin. For economic and political reasons in recent years, there has been a mass migration to western, central and southern Anatolian regions" (SHP 1989/CHP 1995). Although in the formation period of the republic, the fact that a predominant part of the population was of Kurdish origin was acknowledged,[31] this information was always used in order to provide data for the plans of social engineering. That is, once the ethnic composition of these regions is known, it would be used to change that composition in the way the state wanted. It would, for example, would be used to decide in which parts of the country to relocate these Kurdish people, so that they would be integrated into the Turkish culture and hence Turkified. In the report dating to 1989, it is the first time that this information is not used in the service of social engineering.

Until 1995, the stance of the SHP and the CHP towards the Kurdish question was in line with this report. They both opposed military intervention as a solution to the Kurdish question. They both supported the cultural rights of Kurds to the extent of encouraging broadcasting and schooling in Kurdish, yet still contending that Turkish would remain the official language and language of instruction. They also criticized the emergency rule and village-guard system in these regions, which were the remnants of the social engineering (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 150).

Considering this acknowledgment of Kurds' cultural rights, it seems plausible to argue that the CHP pamphlet succeeded in going beyond the state's discourse in terms of including the Kurdish ethnic origin in the country. The very fact that they finally could break their inherent ties with the state demonstrates a change in their stance. However, the fact that they keep assuming the role of "enlightening" suggests that the Orientalizing tendencies proved to be a bigger challenge than acknowledging a distinct Kurdish identity.

[31] This information is based on *Doğu Anadolu ve Cumhuriyet Bürokrasisi* (1939-1951), ed. Tuba Akekmekçi and Muazzaz Pervan (2011).

4.2.4. The Pamphlet's Stance vis-a-vis Contemporary Feminist Literature

The specificity of the 1990s also lies in the inauguration of a new phase of the feminist movement in Turkey. With the challenges posed by the Islamist, Kurdish nationalist, and Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transsexual (LGBT) movements, certain cleavages emerged within the feminist movement itself. Each of these movements had a different perspective on the roots of women's problems, which obliged the feminist movement to take these different perspectives into account. Among these perspectives, the Kurdish women's groups (as part of the mass movements in the Eastern and South-Eastern regions) drew attention to the dual exploitation that Kurdish women faced: first, the patriarchal tribal system dominant in Kurdish culture; and second, the imperialist system that the centralist state imposed on Kurds (Diner and Toktaş 2010: 42). There was a visible rise in non-governmental organizations throughout the country. Kurdish women's associations were not an exception. Kurdish women's organizations such as the KA-MER constituted an example of the institutionalization of the Kurdish women's movement in the 1990s that challenged the unitary and nationalist vision (Diner and Tokbaş 2010: 46).

There was a drastic rise of Kurdish feminist activism organized around journals and associations. A few of them are *Roza*, *Jujin*, *Jin u Jiyan*, and *Yaşamda Özgürlük* (Yüksel 2006, 780). Yeşim Arat's observation of these organizations in comparison with their Turkish counterparts is as follows:

> While Turkish women in Turkey might have ignored their national identities in their activism, Kurdish women began organizing separately. Similar to other minority groups, dominated by the feminism of the majority, Kurdish feminists felt that their particular predicament could not be recognized within Turkish women's groups. They organized around the journal *Rosa*, which began publication its in December 1996, in order to make themselves independent from the Kurdish nationalist movement, from men and from Turkish women. In an interview with the feminist journal *Pazartesi*, the editor of *Rosa* argued that within the Kurdish nationalist movement, women had to become like men to be taken seriously, which as feminists, was not what they wanted (Arat 2000: 120-1).

This quotation, in the first place, concurs with the arguments of Kurdish women's marginalization in the society and within Turkish women's groups. Hence is their urge to organize under different institutions than existing Turkish feminist groups. Moreover, they not only took a distance from men and Turkish women, but also from Kurdish nationalist movement. Kurdish nationalist movement had significant impacts on Kurdish women, because it mobilized and politicized them. However, it is a shared view that these feminist Kurdish organizations distanced themselves from Kurdish national movement on the grounds that they were sidelined in the national struggle by their male comrades (Yüksel 2006: 780). Kurdish women began to question the subordination they were subjected to and criticized the expectation that they were not perceived as women in the national struggle, but rather viewed through sexist lenses (Ibid: 780).

The emergence of Kurdish feminist groups is also striking when we juxtapose their rise to the CHP pamphlet's portrayal of Kurdish women. The pamphlet leaves the impression that Kurdish women are suppressed to an extent that the audience does not expect any kind of political action from them except crying and clamoring, which is repeated many times in the pamphlet to the effect that it reinforces the impression of victim status of Kurdish women in the audience/reader. However, the rise of feminist groups reclaiming political agency suggests that Kurdish women could establish themselves as political subjects that take action to change the patriarchal system prevailing in the Kurdish nationalist movement (Yüksel 2006). However, the pamphlet, somehow, seems not to be aware of these Kurdish women organizations or journals like *Rosa* or *Pazartesi*. When the pamphlet addresses the solutions that should be sought in regard to domestic problems in the region, it finds that there is a profound need for getting organized politically. It states that "getting organized is going to be an important stronghold for southeastern women to overcome the problems that stem from the *unique*[32] historical and cultural background of the region" (CHP 34). It goes on to say that "The dissolving feudal relationships should be replaced with modern mechanisms. Social participation and integration can only be make possible if this need is addressed" (Ibid 34). The primary suggestion of the women's branch to solve these feudal relationships is the establishment of non-governmental organizations, voluntary

[32] Emphasis mine.

institutions, and occupational organizations. However right the authors of the pamphlet are, that they represent the region as devoid of such organizations they propose contradicts what Yeşim Arat's portrayal of feminist organization.

Apart from the journal Arat listed, certain women's organizations were already carrying out activities that address unique needs of the region's women. To give an example, a non-governmental organization, "Southeastern Women's Culture Platform," (SWCP) was founded in 1996 in Diyarbakır, a city in the southeastern region. Although their aim of "creating solutions to the problems of the region" sounds stereotypical, their additional goal of realizing this aim "without [making women in the region] move away from cultural values" appeals to women in the region. This goal also refers to the marginalization of the region's women both because of the dynamics of the region and the women's organizations that require them to "move away" from their cultural values. An article of this platform with the title of "The Reasons for Setting up the Southeastern Women's Culture Platform" also discloses the same gap between women in the region and women's organizations that carry out their activities on the region. This article states that dialogue has to be set up with the aim of creating a social and cultural cohesion among the society, and that the cultural accumulation of the region with its manifold facets should be communicated to the rest of the country (Erarslan 2002: 257). This inclusive stance of the Southeastern Women's Culture Platform towards the already existing structures and values of the region, however, cannot be observed in the CHP pamphlet, suggesting that reconciliation with the structure or values of the region was not an easy task for the CHP.

4.2.5. Emancipation of Women

One striking point is that early in the pamphlet, a parallel is drawn between the emancipation of women and the development of society. The pamphlet delineates a

victim (the women) and a savior (society). This brings us to a central issue regarding women in Kemalist mentality: The pamphlet construes women as "receiving" emancipation through an agent separate from themselves. Society, or the elites in society who inform and enlighten it, are the saviors of the victims. The problem that lies in this conceptualization is the reluctance to acknowledge women's agency through which they may struggle for their own cause.

This conceptualization carries a striking analogy with the supposed "emancipation" of women through the reforms of the Kemalist Republican period. The empowerment of women in the Republican period holds true to a certain extent. However, as it was discussed earlier, these reforms were restricted in their impact on the overall society. They were effective mainly for an urban group who already had an urban socio-economic family background, for they created a space where women were able to work and live more independently than in the previous period. However, for other regions, particularly the rural regions, the reforms did not bring any substantial changes to women's daily experiences of womanhood (Kandiyoti 1987: 322).

On the other hand, in the Turkish framework, the state is vested with an image of "Father State" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008: 5). The discourse of "rescuing" women, I argue, resonates with this paternal mindset in the Turkish context, as it expects the state to break the existing structures, do something almost miraculous and "rescue" women from the uncivilized claws of a feudal system. In other words, the pamphlet draws on an image of change where the state intervenes in the existing system, which is blamed consistently for the failure of the emancipation of women. I will discuss this aspect later. In this sense, the people in the western regions of Turkey, such as the authors of this pamphlet, create an archetype of "the rescued woman" and the women in the Southeast remain on the other side of the border, without clarifying what this rescue actually denotes, or specifying what the criteria for that rescue would be.

This kind of a portrayal of eastern women recalls Meltem Ahıska's argument that in Orientalism and Occidentalism, the non-Western localities are treated as the site where people are "made" modern by others rather than "making" themselves modern. That is to say, these discourses render the very actors of the process of

modernization/Westernization mere passive receptors. However, Ahıska (2010) chooses to treat modernity as a "form of relationship to the present and to oneself" that emerges everywhere around the globe. Ahıska claims that this might have a liberating effect for non-Westerners. However, Ahıska maintains that this conception keeps the theoretical and political problems embedded in the modernist approaches intact. In her use of Occidentalism, it not only refers to something negative but actually reveals the complex field of the subjectivity of the Oriental which responds to the Orientalist gaze.

The next question is: from what are women going to be "rescued?" The pamphlet acknowledges that the problems faced in the region affect women more negatively than men. It then moves on to discuss the societal structure that constrains women, the practices of which are all attributed to feudalism. Among the practices listed, the ones related more closely to women are presented in bold capital letters: They are "the trap of morals," "child marriages," "child motherhood," "philoprogenitiveness," "violence (both against women and towards other targets)," "Islamic marriages," "kin marriage," "marriage in exchange for blood feud," "polygamy," "dowry" and "honor killings" (CHP 1998: 20). However, this sensitivity is imbued with a patronizing tone labeling its targets as "behind" modern practices. The practices are all commonly attributed to pre-modernity and feudal society as in the statement "Replacement of feudal values with the modern values, without a doubt, will eradicate practices such as bride exchange, polygamy" (CHP 1998: 24), suggesting that these pre-modern practices do not exist in the modern, western part of Turkey enlightened by Kemalist doctrines.

Throughout this list, the profile of the woman drawn by the pamphlet is one that has been left to live in poor conditions, subjected to violence by either her father or husband, left bereft of the right to her family inheritance, etc.; all situations from which, women need to be "rescued." There is only one story of hope in which two girls, one at the age of 15 and the other 13, came to believe that they did not need to marry since they had already gained their economic independence from men (CHP 1998: 15). What they refer to with the detailed but repetitive descriptions and stories is also one of the major sources, according to the authors, of the region's problem: the patriarchal system

and its constraints. However, the pamphlet does not specify what or who is responsible for the passive stance of these women.

The members of the CHP women's branch, on the other hand, are indirectly put in the status of strong, politically active, and independent women, which is the exact opposite of women portrayed in the pamphlet. What I will argue, however, is that the structure and tone of the pamphlet does not convey this feeling. That failure in conveying the message of empowered and politically active women stems from the lack of CHP women in the pamphlet. The cover page is dominated by the leader Baykal's words, his own picture embracing a stereotypical southeastern woman-not women who actually executed the door-to-door visits. In addition, at no point in the pamphlet we see the name of Güldal Okuducu, the leader of the women's branch. The women who visited and interviewed southeastern women are not credited neither at the beginning not at the end of the pamphlet. The only people who are credited and acknowledged are intellectuals who contributed to the preparation of the congress and the pamphlet. When women state their observations and make their suggestions, they always begin with an anonymous "We state as the CHP Women's Branch," and proceed with their arguments, which weaken the power their their statements. This anonymity is not what weakens their arguments per se, but they are weakened by the general lack of women's faces, in the metaphorical sense of the word. This lack of the visibility of women who worked for this congress and pamphlet makes the reader question the portrayal of active role Kemalist women play in the politics. Considering the argument that Kemalism empowered women by giving them an assignment, as discussed in the previous chapter, the lack of visibility of women as active subjects might suggest us that the CHP might have called women for duty, once again, to prove their role in the Kurdish question. Referring to the CHP report published in the 1995 (which was originally published by the SHP when Deniz Baykal was the general secretary), Baykal had expressed his pride in being the first party to refer to the Kurdish question in its party program (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 150). The activities of the women's branch could complement this pride with their symbolism, reminding us of the symbolic role women played in the construction of a modern and western Turkey image.

4.2.6. Tradition vs Modernity

The pamphlet states that the backwardness of the region affects women more than men and lays the blame on "tradition" and "feudal values." "The social structure of the region generated by the traditions, morals ("*töre*") and values of the feudal system reigning in the region both shapes and constrains women" (CHP 1998: 21). At this juncture, "feudal values, which maintain themselves through economic and social inequality" are taken to be responsible for the lack of women's socialization, "tradition" being invoked as the explanation. Tradition is referred to in a very abstract way. It would seem that the pamphlet's authors also resort to what Koğacıoğlu calls "the tradition effect," which, she argues, rather than helping to get rid of the given problem, leads to its perpetuation by delimiting "the universe of meaning" through which it can actually be understood (Koğacıoğlu 1996: 121). In the pamphlet, too, employment of "tradition" in explaining the "backwardness" blurs what it is that actually stands in the way of women's liberation. Given that what "the tradition effect" is doing might assume a lack of subjectivity on the part of women, they are portrayed as always already intimidated, without leaving room for change, except in one case where "The women have started to question," referring to questioning the system, yet again with a tone that assumes this questioning as belated (CHP 1998: 29). This is also in line with Koğacıoğlu's observation that "The traditions, especially the traditions of the "other" are considered static cultural features that are not easy to understand fully" (Koğacıoğlu 1996: 121).

In her discussion of the "subjectivity" of women, Deniz Kandiyoti's concept of a "negotiated patriarchal system" might also be useful in interpreting the discourse of Kemalist women. She defines this system as follows: "In a given society that can have different diversities ranging from class, caste, and ethnic origin, if the women have set their life strategies within the framework of a set of concrete constraints of the society in which they live, it is a patriarchal negotiation system" (Kandiyoti 1996: 126). This system, she further explains, refers to a set of rules to which both genders have agreed and consented. This framework is helpful in understanding this specific case, since the portrayal of women as the subjects of violence under a patriarchal system seems to be

lacking the room for change both by the subjects of the system and the system itself. It contains people who are inevitably subject to change, either by the dynamics within or outside of the feudal system. Moreover, the relationship between them is due to the dialogue between the two sides. From this perspective, although the pamphlet aims at opening up a space for changing the situation, it actually delimits the conceptual and dynamic frameworks that might be helpful in pinpointing problems and, more importantly, grasping the case with all of its sophistication, contradictions, and coherences.

4.2.7. Terror

The insistent invocation of the sheikhdom and *agha* system is an important point that should be further analyzed, as these feudal societal structures are more specifically associated with the Kurdish population. In 1998, the Kurdish question was still a pressing issue, though it was abstracted under the term "terror." The Kurdish identity movement was threatening the centralist Turkish republic. However, the issue was still not truly acknowledged and vocalized, but was rather circumvented in political discourse and in the media, resonating with Ahıska's notion of displacing the root causes of problems onto an East-West/tradition-modernity dichotomy.

The employment of the term "terror" is a key to understand the state's approach to the Kurdish question. This choice is significant in the sense that it is a very political term, but one that conceals the political struggle behind it. In political discourse, the existence of the Kurdish question is only implied through the word "terror," which is addressed many times as another major problem that maintains the "backward" status of the region. That is, such a major problem of the 1990s, with all of its historicity, is portrayed in a very reductionist manner. Similar to the handling of forced displacement, neither the ideological background nor its inherent relation to the population of the region is acknowledged. What terror actually refers to comes to the surface in a speech by Deniz Baykal. Baykal acknowledges that there is one thing for which the people in the Southeast region ask: creating job opportunities (CHP: 71). He complements this by

saying that another thing they ask for is “respect for one’s identity.” As a reflection of the CHP’s ideology that supports Kurds’ cultural rights until the 1995 together with the SHP,

4.2.8. Relationship with the State: Did anything change?

One of the defining qualities of the 1990s was the way in which Kemalism reframed its identity. In addition to fragmentation in political representation on the basis of the political party’s representatives, in the aftermath of the 1980 coup and the ensuing reactionary socio-political movements (including the emergence and rise of political Islam and the Kurdish nationalist movement), Kemalism itself underwent a transformation. Considered to be undesirable developments for the tenets of Kemalism in the formative years, Radical Islamic and Kurdish identity movements inevitably made their mark on the Kemalist ideology. As Necmi Erdoğan observes, Kemalism as an ideology underwent a restoration period in the 1990s to such an extent that, borrowing his terms, it was now considered to be “neo-Kemalism” (Erdoğan 2001: 584-592). On the other hand, another group of scholars contend that the Kemalists’ reaction to the challenge of Islamist and Kurdish nationalist movements in the 1990s was actually an insistence on a return to the reliable “draconian methods of suppression first used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997: 17).

The authors of this pamphlet reflect this “neo-Kemalism” by the apologetic tone towards the people of southeastern and eastern regions. The statement that “There are governments which do not attend to the orphanage of the people”, for example, hold the state responsible for not being able to address problems of certain groups. Other instances when this apologetic tone is invoked are phrases such as “intimidated by the state” and “Turkey, all of us, owe an apology to the southeastern province” (CHP 1998: 19). Although the last sentence reveals the “father-state” mentality, the way the governments and state are accused testifies Erdoğan’s observation about Kemalists in the post-1980. He states this as “Kemalist circles experienced a loss of trust towards the state after they had seen that the regime of 1980 coup embraced a Turkish-Islam

synthesis," (Erdoğan 1985: 585). In that sense, Kemalists were losing their belief in the state apparatus as a cohesive element. As a result, Kemalism attempted to create a "civil" pedagogical mentality (Erdoğan 1985). A similar move toward a "civil" mentality can be observed in that this very congress is defined as an activity of a "social solidarity."[33] She contends that, although this project of social solidarity is not a lasting one, it is a first step taken towards a true dialogue. The same "civil" mentality is also in line with the suggestion of the establishment of non-governmental organizations which will take action in improving the living conditions of southeastern women.

The reasons underlying this move towards a "civil" mentality should also be traced to the fact that SHP and CHP had almost identical positions on the Kurdish question before they unified in 1995 (Kirişçi and Winrow, 150). However, this civil mentality, which corresponds to the same period of time with the adoption of the ideology of "social democracy", was going to be abandoned towards the end of the 1990s (Bila 1999: 122), and in the 2000s, nationalism was going to be adopted once more. This ideology of social democracy is invoked as "participatory democracy" in the pamphlet, which is planned to be put into practise by reaching out to the underprivileged parts of the society (CHP 1998:6). In that sense, the year of 1998 can be defined as a period marked by the transition from the ideology social democracy to nationalism. The fact that it was a transition period explains the ambivalent stance adopted by the member of the CHP.

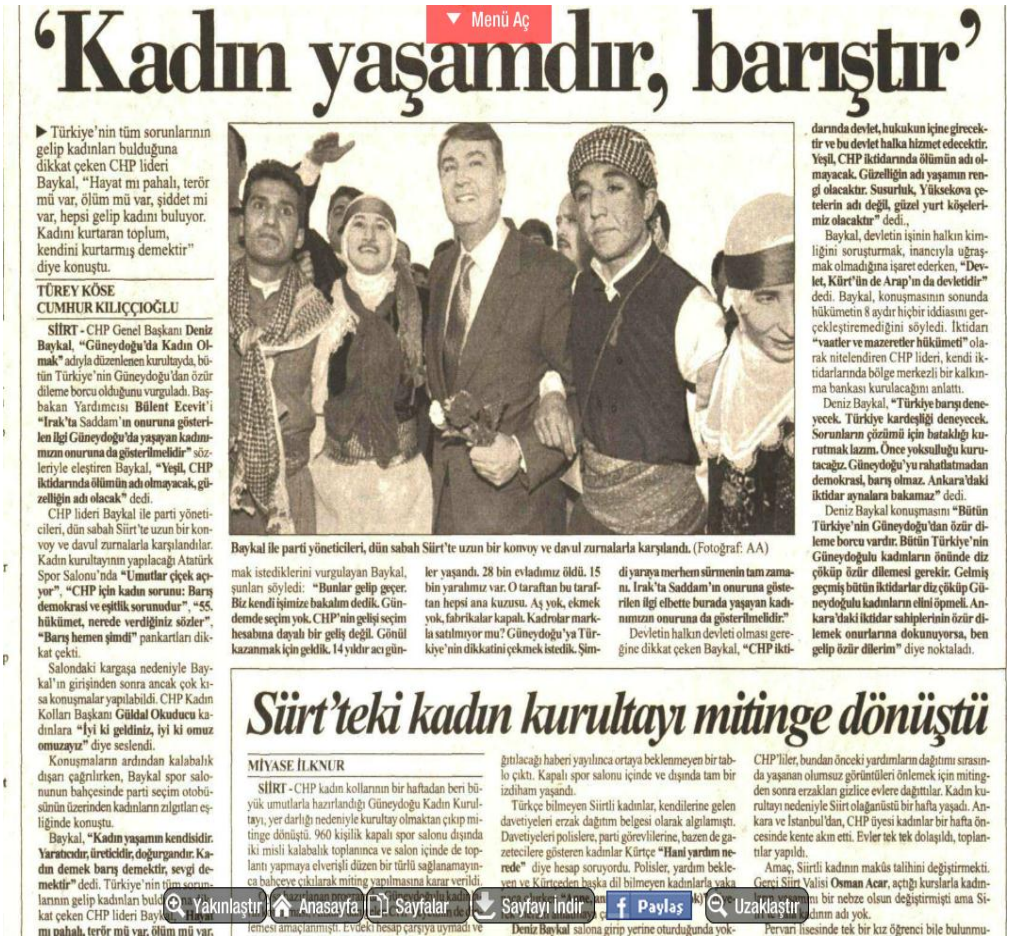
4.2.9. Reception of the Pamphlet in the Mainstream Media

The CHP pamphlet made it into all three mainstream leftist-oriented newspapers: *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, and *Sabah*—although the media coverage is not restricted to these newspapers but also includes the less popular newspapers of *Gündem* and *Kent*. On February 17, 1998, *Hürriyet* reports about the congress that would take

[33] http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/guneydogu-kadinina-merhaba-39006748. "Bizim çalışmamız bir sosyal dayanışma projesi olarak ele alınmalı."

place on February 21 with the headline, "Good morning to the southeastern women," referring to the first encounter between southeastern women and the CHP and revealing the latency of this encounter between Kurdish women and the CHP.[34] It presents a very revealing part of an interview with the leader of the CHP Women's Branch, Güldal Okuducu. According to Okuducu, "women who are educated, women who *can* think and understand, women who are aware of where their country is heading to do not have the right to take no action." In that statement, Okuducu both reveals their mission as "educated" women as to take action against the problems of the southeastern women when explaining why they are at Siirt. Simultaneously, she demarcates themselves from the rural and "uneducated" women of the region. The word choice of "can" strengthens this demarcation with the implications of some women who do not have that capacity. In the following sentences, she states that the new policies should provide them with the tools that will enable them to understand each other. Here, she emphasizes establishment of a dialogue between the two parties, which is very progressive. Yet again, it demonstrates the lack of dialogue in the previous years.

[34] http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/guneydogu-kadinina-merhaba-39006748. The original title is "Güneydoğu Kadınına Merhaba." Okuducu's original statement is "CHP Kadın Kolları Başkanı Güldal Okuducu, Türkiye'nin okumuş, yazmış, düşünen anlayan ve ülkesinin nereye gittiğinin farkında olan ve sorunların çözümlerinin neler olduğunu anlayabilen kadınlarının boş durmaya haklarının olmadığını belirterek şöyle konuştu." Translation and emphasis mine.



‘Kadın yaşamdır, barıştır’

▶ Türkiye’nin tüm sorunlarının gelip kadınları bulduğuna dikkat çeken CHP lideri Baykal, “Hayat mı pahalı, terör mü var, ölüm mü var, şiddet mi var, hepsi gelip kadını buluyor. Kadını kurtaran toplum, kendini kurtarmış demektir” diye konuştu.

TÜREY KÖSE
CUMHUR KILIÇÇIOĞLU

SİİRT - CHP Genel Başkanı **Deniz Baykal**, **“Güneydoğu’da Kadın Olmak”** adıyla düzenlenen kurultayda, bütün Türkiye’nin Güneydoğu’dan özür dileme borcu olduğunu vurguladı. Başbakan Yardımcısı **Bülent Ecevit**’i **“Irak’ta** Saddam’**ın onuruna gösterilen ilgi Güneydoğu’da yaşayan kadınımızın onuruna da gösterilmelidir”** sözleriyle eleştiren Baykal, **“Yeşil, CHP iktidarında ölümün adı olmayacak, güzelliğin adı olacak”** dedi.

CHP lideri Baykal ile parti yöneticileri, dün sabah Siirt’te uzun bir konvoy ve davul zurnalarla karşılandılar. Kadın kurultayının yapılacağı Atatürk Spor Salonu’nda **“Umutlar çiçek açıyor”**, **“CHP için kadın sorunu: Barış demokrasi ve eşitlik sorunudur”**, **“55. hükümet, nerede verdiğiniz sözler”**, **“Barış hemen şimdi”** pankartları dikkat çekti.

Salondaki kargaşa nedeniyle Baykal’ın girişinden sonra ancak çok kısa konuşmalar yapılabildi. CHP Kadın Kolları Başkanı **Güldal Okuducu** kadınlara **“İyi ki geldiniz, iyi ki omuz omuzayız”** diye seslendi.

Konuşmaların ardından kalabalık dışarı çağrılırken, Baykal spor salonunun bahçesinde parti seçim otobüsünün üzerinden kadınların zılgıtları eşliğinde konuştu.

Baykal, **“Kadın yaşamın kendisidir. Yaratıcıdır, üreticidir, doğurgandır. Kadın demek barış demektir, sevgi demektir”** dedi. Türkiye’nin tüm sorunlarının gelip kadınları bulduğuna dikkat çeken CHP lideri Baykal, “Hayat mı pahalı, terör mü var, ölüm mü var,

Baykal ile parti yöneticileri, dün sabah Siirt’te uzun bir konvoy ve davul zurnalarla karşılandı. (Fotoğraf: AA)

mak istediklerini vurgulayan Baykal, şunları söyledi: **“Bunlar gelip geçer. Biz kendi işimize bakalım dedik. Gündemde seçim yok. CHP’nin gelişi seçim hesabına dayalı bir geliş değil. Gönül kazanmak için geldik. 14 yıldır acı günler yaşandı. 28 bin evladımız öldü. 15 bin yaralımız var. O taraftan bu taraftan hepsi ana kuzusu. Aş yok, ekmek yok, fabrikalar kapalı. Kadrolar markala satılmıyor mu? Güneydoğu’ya Türkiye’nin dikkatini çekmek istedik. Şimdi yaraya merhem sürmenin tam zamanı. Irak’ta Saddam’ın onuruna gösterilen ilgi elbette burada yaşayan kadınımızın onuruna da gösterilmelidir.”**

Devletin halkın devleti olması gerekeğine dikkat çeken Baykal, **“CHP iktidarında devlet, hukukun içine girecektir ve bu devlet halka hizmet edecektir. Yeşil, CHP iktidarında ölümün adı olmayacak. Güzelliğin adı yaşamın rengi olacaktır. Susurluk, Yüksekova çetelerin adı değil, güzel yurt köşelerimiz olacaktır”** dedi.

Baykal, devletin işinin halkın kimliğini soruşturmak, inancıyla uğraşmak olmadığına işaret ederken, **“Devlet, Kürt’ün de Arap’ın da devletidir”** dedi. Baykal, konuşmasının sonunda hükümetin 8 aydır hiçbir iddiasını gerçekleştiremediğini söyledi. İktidarı **“vaatler ve mazeretler hükümeti”** olarak nitelendiren CHP lideri, kendi iktidarlarında bölge merkezli bir kalkınma bankası kurulacağını anlattı.

Deniz Baykal, **“Türkiye barışı deneyecek. Türkiye kardeşliği deneyecek. Sorunların çözümü için batakhğı kurutmak lazım. Önce yoksulluğu kurutacağız. Güneydoğu’yu rahatlatmadan demokrasi, barış olmaz. Ankara’daki iktidar aynalara bakamaz”** dedi.

Deniz Baykal konuşmasını **“Bütün Türkiye’nin Güneydoğu’dan özür dileme borcu vardır. Bütün Türkiye’nin Güneydoğulu kadınların önünde diz çöküp özür dilemesi gerekir. Gelmiş geçmiş bütün iktidarlar diz çöküp Güneydoğulu kadınların elini öpmeli. Ankara’daki iktidar sahiplerinin özür dilemek onurlarına dokunuyorsa, ben gelip özür dilerim”** diye noktaladı.

Siirt’teki kadın kurultayı mitinge dönüştü

MİYASE İLKNUR

SİİRT - CHP kadın kollarının bir haftadan beri büyük umutlarla hazırlandığı Güneydoğu Kadın Kurultayı, yer darlığı nedeniyle kurultay olmaktan çıkıp mitinge dönüştü. 960 kişilik kapalı spor salonu dışında iki misli kalabalık toplanınca ve salon içinde de toplantı yapmaya elverişli düzen bir türlü sağlanamayınca bahçeye çıkılarak miting yapılmasına karar verildi.

Türkçe bilmeyen Siirtli kadınlar, kendilerine gelen davetiyeleri erzak dağıtım belgesi olarak algılamıştı. Davetiyeleri polislere, parti görevlilerine, bazen de gazetecilere gösteren kadınlar Kürtçe **“Hani yardım nerede”** diye hesap soruyordu. Polisler, yardım bekleyen ve Kürtçeden başka dil bilmeyen kadınlarla yaka

Deniz Baykal salona girip yerine oturduğunda yok-

CHP’liler, bundan önceki yardımların dağıtımı sırasında yaşanan olumsuz görüntüleri önlemek için mitingden sonra erzakları gizlice evlere dağıttılar. Kadın kurultayı nedeniyle Siirt olağanüstü bir hafta yaşadı. Ankara ve İstanbul’dan, CHP üyesi kadınlar bir hafta öncesinde kente akın etti. Evler tek tek dolaşıldı, toplantılar yapıldı.

Amaç, Siirtli kadının maküs talihini değiştirmekti. Gerçi Siirt Valisi **Osman Acar**, açtığı kurslarla kadınının bir nebze olsun değiştirmişti ama Si-
dının adı yok.

Pervari lisesinde tek bir kız öğrenci bile bulunmu-

Menü Aç

Yakınlaştır | Anasayfa | Sayfalar | Sayfayı İndir | Paylaş | Uzaklaştır

Figure 2. *Cumhuriyet* coverage on February 22, 1998.

The coverage of the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* is the most lengthy among the other newspapers (see Picture 2). In the image Cumhuriyet portrays, we encounter the stereotypical southeastern women and men in their traditional clothes while they are dancing (to be exact, *halay*, the traditional dance of Anatolia) arm in arm with the CHP leader Baykal, which gives the sense of proximity and sincerity on the part of Baykal. Yet again, we do not see any of the members of the CHP’s women’s branch. It contextualizes the congress with a detailed description in the introduction, congress duration, and the end. It also presents an interesting story about an instance at the congress. According to *Cumhuriyet*, the CHP leader Deniz Baykal and other party

leaders were welcomed with a flourish of trumpets by a large mass,[35] showing the locals' enthusiasm for meeting the CHP leaders. Three journalists report on the congress separately, illustrating significant attention they pay to this congress. Türey Köse and Kemal Kılıççıoğlu's piece focuses on Baykal's speeches, which occupy a huge place in the pamphlet as well. Miyase İlknur's piece, on the other hand, vividly portray the atmosphere in the congress. While the original idea was to hold the congress in a sports hall, which sits 960 people, when the crowd doubled the expected number, the party leader decides to turn it into a rally. It turned out that Women from Siirt, who could not speak Turkish, interpreted the invitation for the congress as call for the distribution of foodstuff. When they notice that the distribution does not take place, they were calling the police and other officers account for it in Kurdish. This instance, I believe, illuminates the practical approach of women to the congress and lack of communication, symbolized in the difference in the language.

Milliyet, on the other hand, prefers to narrate the story of a woman from the region, who questions if they lack anything compared to women in the western parts of the country. This woman called Havva Yürek, 38, expressed her feelings as follows:

> Do you know when I begin reacted? I reacted when I watched those TV channels, when I saw horizons that I had no idea of. I pondered about what they [women in the west] had they you do not have, what the difference between them and me was, why they were born to a totally different world than mine, and why we are forgotten and the world we live in is ignored by them. I could not find an answer. It's a shame, enough is enough. We are also alive and want to live. Why is there no work for us? [...] Because they do not care about us."[36]

As opposed to the pamphlet, *Milliyet* chose to give voice to a woman, who questions what the difference between the urban women with many opportunities ahead of them and herself is, which is expressed all too directly by the sentence "What do we lack?". It shows, finally, how forgotten women felt themselves in the southeastern parts. More importantly, it is not expressed by a reference to the state and underdevelopment, but rather as a reference to privileged women, who lead a life that they can also watch on television. This narration is important, because it reveals the wide gap between

[35] http://www.cumhuriyetarsivi.com/katalog/192/sayfa/1998/2/22.xhtml
[36] http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/guneydogu-kadinina-merhaba-39006748

women's experiences in the eastern and western regions of Turkey and what kind of a tension it conceives.

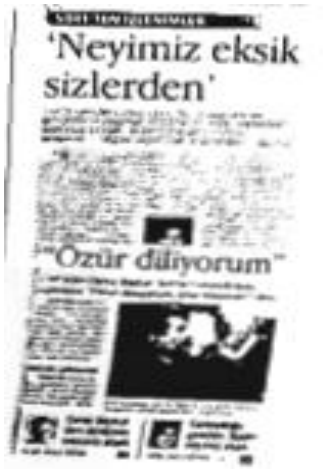

'Neyimiz eksik sizlerden'
"Özür diliyorum"

Figure 3. Milliyet's coverage on the CHP congress in 1998. "What do we lack?"

4.2.10. Cultural Encounters: The Kurdish Question Relocated to the Urban Context

Although so far the two sides, the authors of the CHP pamphlet and women in Southeast Anatolia, look as if they are very neatly differentiated from one another without sharing anything in common, there is a dynamic which brings them together in the 1990s: the accumulation of a vast Kurdish population in the metropolises due to internal or forced displacement. In the pamphlet, migration is invoked various times. In the pamphlet and is represented as yet another problem caused by the underdevelopment of the region. It reads:

> Migrants, along with their troubles, have become the problem of urban dwellers as well. Women in the urban and rural regions will face the task of overcoming this together.
>
> Migration has a negative impact not only on the cities in the region but also outside of it. Many cities have been struggling under the pressure of this intensive migration flow. The problem has been carried to the metropolises too. The peripheries of Istanbul, Adana, and Mersin have turned into a new Southeast Anatolia. When we are creating solutions for

> the Southeast, the new guests have to be taken into account. Projects which will accelerate the integration of the masses in the cities have to be developed parallel to each other. In short, the peripheries of the societies have to be taken into consideration along with the greater Southeast and have to be enlightened together with each other (CHP 1998: 13-14).

The stance of the argument in this quotation regarding migration and its impacts on other cities reads ambivalently, yet it still encompasses something I find important. The newcomers to the city are called "guests" of the city, suggesting a hope that they would eventually become permanent residents of the urban areas. In this sense, this stance does not assume an equal partnership among the citizens, but rather creates a ladder of hierarchy, if not reinforces an already existing one, by positioning the current city residents on a higher level than its newcomers. Moreover, by the choice of the word "periphery," denoting a higher negativity in Turkish than it does in English, enhances and reinforces the feeling of discontent.

4.3. Conclusion

In the 1990s, the CHP was undergoing a transition, to which the pamphlet I analyzed is a testimony. This transition was in line with the dissolution of the center and periphery cleavage, which was demonstrated most clearly in the rise of radical Islamic movement and the Kurdish question. The Kurdish question constituted one of the main challenges for the Turkish state and the CHP alike, as it was moving from the periphery and acquiring a central place in Turkish politics. In the first period of the 1990s, the CHP, together with the SHP, took important steps in acknowledging the Kurdish identity. However, this acknowledgement, not surprisingly, had its own ambivalences that still carried the marks of Orientalizing tendencies.

In the 75th anniversary of the republic and the CHP, the inherent ties between these two groups were being shattered. The CHP was on the way of forming a more "civil" identity. During this process, it was looking for support from different layers of the society such as the southeastern region. The southeastern region was both a "proving ground" for the modernity of the CHP and a new territory on which the party

could base its legitimacy. Hence was the apologetic tone of the pamphlet and the statements such as “people do not belong to the state, the state belongs to people.”

Last but not least, the pamphlet I analyzed in this chapter suggests me that the CHP consulted, one more time, the symbolic role of women in conveying message of getting a new identity, by which I explain the inadequacy of the visibility of women in the pamphlet. The party allocated the women’s branch as a subsidiary/complementary role in the dissemination of its ideology. In a similar vein, although the pamphlet was the work of the women’s branch, the women who made this congress and the pamphlet possible could not take credit for it.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In Turkish Studies, there has been a strong tendency to analyze the modern history of Turkey from the perspective of Westernization (Mardin 2006; Ahmad 1969; Berkes 1973; Zürcher 1998). Although this trend preserved its impact on the following scholarship produced in its wake, the opportunities that arise from that perspective have not been utilized when it comes to the perennial Kurdish Question. In this thesis, first, I argued that the simultaneous projects of Westernization and modernization brought about a certain Orientalist attitude towards Turkey's periphery. I attempted to refine the social engineering theory with the inclusion of Orientalist and Occidentalist theories. I employed these theories because of the opportunities they provide to analyze Kemalist discourses with a particular emphasis on their developmentalist approach to the region. I employed Orientalism as a power mechanism that relies on othering based on geographical and temporal differences. I argued that in a similar way that the West assumed an ontological and epistemological distinction between the East and West, the center of Turkey created its own Other in the East through the creation of stereotypical images of eastern regions. Occidentalism, on the other hand, is employed to understand the role of the European Union in Turkish politics regarding the Kurdish Question. Occidentalism constituted the other focus of this study. The way I employed Occidentalism was "the sets of practices and arrangements justified in and against the

imagined ideal of 'the West' in the non-West" (Ahıska 2003, 266). As a process Said considered to be bound with Orientalism, Occidentalism further serves as a useful framework in the Kurdish Question, because it refers to the way in which the West emerges as a criterion/norm in the processes of decision-making in non-Western contexts. Within the limits of this study, Occidentalism has been exemplified via the EU's role in the changing attitude towards the Kurdish Question during Turkey's EU accession process.

In this thesis, in the light of above-mentioned discussion, I suggested that Orientalism/Occidentalism, Center/Periphery are useful, yet underestimated, concepts to understand the Kurdish question, which can contribute to the theories employed so far. While this question cannot be reduced to these concepts, I argued that they can be used as effective tools to understand the power mechanism at play in the Kurdish Question in Turkey, especially in the time period encompassing the formation period of the republic. I argued that the Orientalism, as a theory that emphasized the power of the Orientalist to define the Orient and embark certain stereotypical images on the Orient, carries the potential of better understanding the impacts of the Kurdish question on the social fragmentation in Turkey. Hence is the importance of Orientalism as a concept that can be used in understanding the Kurdish question. In order to better understand this fragmentation, I chose to work on the way Kemalist elites, who assumed the role of the masses from the top on the model of the West, perceived their own eastern parts.

On the other hand, starting with the 1990s, I argued that the Kurdish Question also seems to have undergone a transition both in terms of what it is and how it is considered by the state elites and Kemalist elites. I argued that the Orientalist ideology vis-a-vis the Kurdish Question relied on the already existing center and periphery cleavage until the 1990s. However, with the dissolution of the center and periphery in the 1990s, the CHP began to acknowledge the decreasing appeal of its identification with the western values and modernization on the model of western values. However, the fact that the CHP's stance was ambivalent and in the process of transformation in the 1990s makes it hard for one to extend these evaluations to the 2000s. In that sense, the case analyzed here presents yet another example of the complications that arise from the experience of modernity in non-western contexts. Combination of dynamics such as

Turkey's ambition for Western style modernism and the prospect of European Union accession, the emergence of the Kurdish nationalist movement as an inevitable phenomena that cannot be overlooked, and the reformation the CHP experiences seem to have played an important role in the way these new relationships were forged with the Kurds. On the other hand, the Kurds seem to have developed their own way of reacting to handling this dynamic in the form of insurgency, the internalization of the values attributed to them as well as forming a new identity vis-à-vis the state.

The history of the Kemalist policies addressing women constituted the second tier of this thesis, given the central place these policies took in the formation of the Turkish republic. These reforms served the Kemalist ideology in various ways. In the first place, they served to establish a new image of being a part of the civilized Western world. That is, the fact that Kemalist reforms addressing women were put into practice marked that Turkey's place within the Western countries, which became a source of pride for Kemalists. Second, it created a group of "grateful" Kemalist women who were 'granted' rights. While the republic gave public visibility to women, women, in return, served the republic as the "new face" of its Westernization task. The choice of the image of women was a subtle way of bringing visibility to an ideology, as it combines the symbols of being secular as opposed to being religious, progressive as opposed to "modern," and European as opposed to Middle Eastern. Depending on to what extent women are secular, "modern," or "western," the messages of modernness and westernness are conveyed; indeed a very critical part of constructing the Turkish identity. In this sense, women stood at the crossroads of many powerful ideologies. In other words, the semiotics of women conveyed the messages of the state's forming ideologies.

Combination of the above-mentioned constituted the core of this thesis, which is a discourse analysis of the CHP Women's Branch's report on the conditions of women living in the southeastern regions of Turkey. The analysis of this pamphlet, together with the contextual research I carried out, provided me with the argument that the CHP was undergoing a transition, to which the pamphlet I analyzed is a testimony, in the 1990s. This transition was in line with the dissolution of the center and periphery cleavage, which was demonstrated most clearly in the rise of radical Islamic movement

and the Kurdish question. The Kurdish question constituted one of the main challenges for the Turkish state and the CHP alike, as it was moving from the periphery and acquiring a central place in Turkish politics. In the first period of the 1990s, the CHP, together with the SHP, took important steps in acknowledging the Kurdish identity. However, this acknowledgement, not surprisingly, had its own ambivalences that still carried the marks of Orientalizing tendencies.

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